00099269

Digitized with financial assistance from

H T Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018

HODDER AND STOUGHTON'S PEOPLE'S LIBRARY

General Editor : Sidney Dark

HODDER AND STOUGHTON'S
PEOPLE'S LIBRARY

GENERAL EDITOR: SIDNEY DARK

2/6 net each volume

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI. A Popular Biography of the Best Beloved of the Saints. By GILBERT K. CHESTERTON.

VICTORIAN POETRY. By JOHN DRINKWATER.

EVERYDAY BIOLOGY. By J. ARTHUR THOMSON, Regius Professor of Natural History, Aberdeen University.

THE POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE. By FRANK RUTTER, Art Editor of the *Sunday Times*.

THE STORY OF THE RENAISSANCE. By SIDNEY DARK.

ATOMS AND ELECTRONS. By J. W. N. SULLIVAN, Scientific Editor of the *Nation*.

Other Volumes in preparation

ST. PAUL'S HOUSE, WARWICK SQUARE, E.C.4

THE STORY OF THE RENAISSANCE

99269

BY

SIDNEY DARK

H&S

HODDER AND STOUGHTON LTD.
LONDON TORONTO

Dor/310
99269

General Preface

THE object of HODDER AND STOUGHTON'S PEOPLE'S LIBRARY is to supply in brief form simply written introductions to the study of History, Literature, Biography and Science; in some degree to satisfy that ever-increasing demand for knowledge which is one of the happiest characteristics of our time. The names of the authors of the first volumes of the Library are sufficient evidence of the fact that each subject will be dealt with authoritatively, while the authority will not be of the "dry-as-dust" order. Not only is it possible to have learning without tears, but it is also possible to make the acquiring of knowledge a thrilling and entertaining adventure. HODDER AND STOUGHTON'S PEOPLE'S LIBRARY will, it is hoped, supply this adventure.

Made and Printed in Great Britain. R. Clay & Sons, Ltd., Printers, Bungay.

Contents

PAGE

CHAPTER I

THE DAWN 7

CHAPTER II

POLITICS 21

CHAPTER III

RENAISSANCE LITERATURE 64

CHAPTER IV

THE ART OF THE RENAISSANCE . . . 96

CHAPTER V

THE REFORMATION 118

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL CONDITIONS 156

I am much indebted to my friend the Rev. C. B. Mortlock for reading the proofs of this book.—S. D.

Chapter I — *The Dawn*

THE Renaissance, the rebirth of Europe, is generally regarded as the period of history that began in 1453 with the capture of Constantinople by the Turks and came to an end with the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603. In no period of human history, with the exception of the last hundred and fifty years, did so many portentous events happen. It was an era of great happenings and great men. In Italy it was the age of Michael Angelo, Rafael, and Leonardo da Vinci, of Botticelli, Benvenuto Cellini, Correggio, and Titian, of Petrarch and Tasso, of Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia. In France it was the age of Henry of Navarre, of Rabelais, and of Montaigne. In Spain, of Cervantes and the gloomy Philip. In Germany it was the age of Dürer and the Van Eycks. In England it was the age of Henry VIII and Thomas More, of Elizabeth, Drake, and Shakespeare. During the Renais-

sance Luther and Calvin played their great rôles, and it saw Loyola and the little understood counter-Reformation. At the beginning, Columbus and Da Gama made their voyages, and its later years were made romantic by the hazardous adventures of Frobisher and Drake. It was the age of the New Learning, an age of adventure, an age of criticism, an age of laughter, an age of reaction and rejection, of destruction and reconstruction, of glory for princes and of suffering for the common people.

The rebirth of Europe did not occur without warning, nor was it unheralded by preparatory achievement. When the Turks captured Constantinople and the great cathedral church of St. Sophia became a Moslem mosque, Greek scholars, exiled from their homes, took refuge in Italy and even wandered further west, carrying with them the manuscripts of the Greek classics of which Western Europe was almost entirely ignorant during the Middle Ages—almost, but not quite, for Latin translations of at least two of the books of Aristotle and versions of others of the classics had reached European universities by way of the Arab scholars who had settled in Spain and who were

for several centuries the heirs of the culture of Athens and Alexandria.

After the disruption of the Roman Empire by the invaders from the barbarian lands east of the Rhine and north of the Danube, the civilization that had been born in Greece and nurtured and applied by the genius of Rome collapsed in a welter of social disorder, which continued for centuries. During this period Europe was governed by a horde of petty chieftains constantly warring with each other and owing what was generally only a shadowy allegiance to some king who was rarely more than *primus inter pares*. A large part of Spain was in the hands of the Moors; France was continually ravaged by wars between rival dukes; Anglo-Saxon England was the prey of the marauding Dane. The Normans, the hardiest and most capable of all mediæval adventurers, were the fore-runners of political reconstruction. They conquered the Saracens and established a kingdom in Sicily, and by their invasion of England they forcibly brought about the national unity which Anglo-Saxon patriots like King Alfred and St. Dunstan had never been able to achieve.

In the welter of the Dark Ages, art and literature naturally withered and almost died. Learning was, however, preserved in the Benedictine Monasteries, described by Mr. H. G. Wells as "centres of light, restoring, maintaining and raising the standard of cultivation, preserving some sort of elementary education, spreading useful arts, multiplying and storing books, and keeping before the eyes of the world the spectacle and example of a social backbone." Outside the monasteries, education was unknown. There were no roads,—there was no law. Occasionally a strong ruler such as Charlemagne succeeded in re-establishing for a while an approximation to the order which the Roman Empire had given to a large part of Europe, and the gradual institution of the feudal system brought about social stability. The power of the Church, the one really stable authority in Europe, was on the whole used for the protection of the poor, and its democratic constitution gave men of the lowliest birth an opportunity for a career of usefulness. The hedge-priests, of whom John Ball is a famous example, were the labour leaders of the Middle Ages. Much has been

written of the humanism of the Renaissance, but the world has never known a sweeter humanist than the twelfth-century St. Francis, and the friars, the followers of the gentle St. Francis and the sterner St. Dominic, " the militia of Jesus Christ," spread over Europe, carrying with them both sympathy and learning.

In the centuries before the Reformation the trade-guilds were not only an economic, but also a political power. They secured for the worker better industrial conditions, and what was even more important they protected the dignity of craftsmanship. The guilds had a definite religious basis, and indeed owed their existence to the patronage and encouragement of the Church. The darkness had been sombre, but the Renaissance of the fifteenth century was definitely heralded in the thirteenth, the golden age of mediæval times. In this century the guilds grew stronger, the Parliamentary system was born in England, the burgher class obtained more and more influence, and there was a development of nationalism and of distinctive national life. But mediæval nationalism was most hostile to internationalism, and European

brotherhood found its expression in the idealism of the Crusades. Towards the end of the thirteenth century paper was for the first time made in Western Europe. This was an event with the most far-reaching consequences, for without paper the propagation of learning and the development of education would obviously have been impossible. Paper was made in China in the second century before Christ, and the Arabs were making paper in the ninth century A.D. Three hundred years later, paper was made in Italy. A hundred and fifty years after the western world had learned the art of paper-making, the first book was printed with movable type in Haarlem, and in 1477 Caxton set up his printing-press at Westminster. Paper and the printing press made the Renaissance possible. They were the instruments of the new learning, of the new culture, of the new faith. Without them, Erasmus would have been impotent and the Bible could never have been put into the hands of the poor.

The thirteenth century was the century of St. Thomas Aquinas and of Roger Bacon, the learned Oxford Franciscan who anticipated the Renaissance revolt against ignorance and

authority, who insisted on the need of experiment, and who foretold many of the more significant mechanical developments of our own generation. The fourteenth century saw the beginnings of national literature. The little original writing produced during the Dark Ages was all in Latin, and the story of modern European literature began when Dante wrote his *Divina Commedia* in Italian. A generation later Wycliff translated the Bible into English, and Chaucer wrote the *Canterbury Tales*, that vivid and intensely English picture of the happy humanity of the golden days of the Middle Ages.

Mediæval literature may be said to have come to an end with François Villon, the French poet-thief, whose genius was as gloomy and despairing as Chaucer's was happy and sunny.

While it is convenient to date the beginning of the Renaissance from the fall of Constantinople, the Italian poet Petrarch, who was born in 1304 and died in 1374, may properly be regarded as the father of the New Learning. He never actually learned to read Greek, but for his particular benefit his friend Boccaccio translated Homer into Latin. Petrarch studied

classical archæology in Rome. He read Horace and Virgil, regarding Virgil not, as Dante regarded him, as a symbolic personage, but as the great poet of the Augustan age. Petrarch rescued Horace from the neglect of centuries and inspired interest in classical Latin as distinguished from the dog-Latin of the monasteries.

In the early years of the fifteenth century Cosimo de' Medici, the merchant prince of Florence, financed the famous scholar Niccolo de' Niccoli who collected a library of eight hundred classical manuscripts which were housed in the Convent of San Marco. This library was catalogued by Tommaso Parentucelli, who became Pope in 1447 and was himself the founder of the great library at the Vatican. In the years immediately preceding the fall of Constantinople Leonardo Aretino translated Aristotle, Plato and Plutarch into Latin, but fifty years earlier the Greek scholar Chrysoloras had come from Constantinople to Florence and had been appointed to the chair of Greek in the Florence University. Chrysoloras was followed by another Greek scholar, Gemistos, who taught the philosophy of Plato in Florence, and

it was owing to his influence that Cosimo de' Medici founded a Platonic Academy in imitation of the Academy of Athens. These men prepared the way for the scholars who journeyed westward in 1453.

This, then, was the situation in Europe in 1453. Paper had been manufactured and printing-presses were already in existence; Dante had written the greatest of all Italian poems, in which is expressed with majestic grandeur the dreams of the Age of Faith; Boccaccio had written his stories and Chaucer his poetry; the spirit of inquiry and scepticism had reawakened with Roger Bacon; Wycliff and his follower, the Bohemian, John Huss, had vigorously protested against clerical abuses and had put the text of the Scriptures into the hands of the people—it should be remembered that Wycliff never wavered in his loyalty to the Catholic Faith; the commonalty had found its courage and in the peasant wars of the fourteenth century had risen against oppression, the interest in learning had been already awakened and the Church remained the friend and protector of the poor.

In 1461, eight years after the fall of Con-

stantinople, Louis XI became king of France and Edward IV became king of England. Despite his grotesque superstitions, Louis XI was essentially a modern sovereign and a master of statecraft, inheriting the noble patriotic tradition which France owes to Joan of Arc, most appealing and most attractive of saints. He spent his life astutely and ruthlessly destroying the power of the great feudal dukes who in preceding reigns had been the rivals of the king, and by establishing the unchallengeable authority of the crown, he began the creation of a unified France, a work to be concluded by Cardinal de Richelieu and Henry of Navarre. It will be shown in the following pages that the creation of nations with their own peculiar life is one of the outstanding achievements of the Renaissance, and in this respect, as well as in his care for learning and his patronage of trade, Louis XI is a characteristic Renaissance figure. Edward IV of England came to the throne at the end of the Wars of the Roses, which had effectively impoverished the barons and vastly minimized their capacity for interfering with the sovereign. Edward was the French king's equal in subtle statesmanship and was also

attracted by the New Learning. In Spain Ferdinand of Aragon united all the Christian dominions of the peninsula into one monarchy and before the end of the century Granada was captured and the Moors at last expelled from Europe. The great schism of the Church, which sét up one pope at Rome and another at Avignon, came to an end in 1447 when Nicholas V ascended the Papal Throne.

It is well from the beginning to point out that while in many respects the Renaissance was a period of progress and development, in other respects it was a period of reaction and retrogression. The interest in classical literature and classical philosophy that came with the new learning brought with it a return to pagan morals and the pagan point of view. Renaissance Italy was at the same time made wonderful by the genius of great artists and made horrible by the boundless debauchery and reckless ambition of princes, of whom Cesare Borgia remains the type. The Renaissance prince laughed at scruples and let nothing interfere with ambition and policy.

Leonardo da Vinci, Savonarola, Rabelais, Cervantes, More, and Erasmus are among the

splendid figures of the Renaissance; but no less typical of the time were Machiavelli, who believed, as Mr. Wells has said, that "to swagger triumphantly in the world must be the crown of human desire," and Henry VIII, who attempted to create a new Church in order that he might possess a new wife.

The Renaissance was a period of bond breaking; but not only did men snap the shackles that hindered development, they also gleefully broke the restrictions that made for decency and discipline. And so it happened that, whatever may have been the abuses in the Church that excited Wycliff's reforming zeal in the fourteenth century, they were infinitely greater during the years that Roderigo Borgia sat on the Papal Throne. Luther's revolt at the beginning of the sixteenth century had ampler justification than Wycliff's a hundred and fifty years before.

As I have already suggested, in many of its happiest aspects the Renaissance was a period of continuation rather than of beginning. The interest in education shown by such men as Cardinal Wolsey and Dean Colet was anticipated by Henry VI, that saintly and most

unlucky king, who, thirteen years before the fall of Constantinople, founded Eton College and King's College, Cambridge, and whose example led to the foundation of other schools and colleges in various parts of England. Moreover, so far as literature is concerned, Dante, the sublime voice of the Middle Ages, found no peer until Shakespeare began to write in the last years of the Renaissance era.

The Renaissance gave nothing, or next to nothing, to the peasant and the town worker. During its hundred and fifty years the commonalty in France were rendered as desperately miserable by the wars of religion as they had been a hundred years before by the invading English soldiery. In England the splendid peasantry that had sent its archers to Creçy and Agincourt to conquer the chivalry of Europe suffered irreparable loss when the monasteries were despoiled and dissolved, and the guilds of town workers were suppressed and their goods stolen by Thomas Cromwell's marauders. Merrie England, the England of song and legend, came to an end with the Wars of the Roses, and when Elizabeth, last of the Renaissance sovereigns, reigned, Vagrancy Acts had to be

passed by Parliament to deal with the homeless and starving.

Interesting as the Renaissance is and great as are the gifts that it handed down to posterity, its glory is often sorry tinsel, and it must remain a matter of individual opinion whether it did not take away more than it gave. It may indeed be safely said that nothing that the Renaissance left behind it, not even the frescoes of Michael Angelo, the Virgins of Rafael, or the plays of Shakespeare, are to be compared with the great cathedrals that remain for us the monuments of the piety and the comradeship of the Middle Ages. The art of the Renaissance was individual and aristocratic; the great achievements of mediævalism were communal and democratic.

THE Italy of the Renaissance was a land of small States and mutually jealous cities, as Mrs. Taylor has said, " a land of despotisms and oligarchies " calling themselves republics. The people were acutely intelligent and warlike and their rulers could only retain power " by acts of courage, craft, magnificence." There were five great powers in Renaissance Italy—Florence, Milan, Venice, Naples, and Rome.

During the Middle Ages there was a constant struggle for political power between the Popes and the Emperors, the German sovereigns, reigning in Vienna, who claimed the heritage of Charlemagne and the headship of the Holy Roman Empire. During centuries of war the Italian cities were forced by the instinct of self-preservation to fortify themselves against possible invaders, and their political importance as factors in a never-ceasing struggle ensured them a measure of political independence and

democratic government. This government generally consisted of a council composed of rich burghers, a deliberative assembly chosen from the more distinguished citizens, and finally a larger assembly including the whole adult population. Before the death of Dante this free communalism, as it is called, was already giving place to the rule of the despots.

For seventy years, from 1443, Florence was ruled by the Medicis, first by Cosimo, the founder of the line of merchant princes, a shrewd, light-hearted patron of art and men of letters, then by his grandson Lorenzo the Magnificent, in the years of whose rule the city reached the height of its artistic splendour, and lastly by the comparatively incompetent Piero. During the later years of the fifteenth century the famous Dominican monk, Savonarola, appeared in Florence and vehemently denounced the pagan profligacy of the city. The maxim of modern Florence was: Do what you will, but do it beautifully. To Savonarola it was righteousness alone that exalted a nation. The Renaissance nobles, described by John Addington Symonds as "those young men in tight hose and particoloured jackets, with

oaths upon their lips and deeds of violence and lust within their hearts," moved Savonarola to holy wrath. After seven years of prayer and preparation he took up his residence in the Convent of San Marco, where Cosimo had housed his great library. But in his zeal for the old faith Savonarola cared nothing for the New Learning. The gaiety, the wit, the humour, the art of the Florence of Lorenzo left him cold. He only perceived its vice, its cruelties, its crimes and its corruptions. He set no value on pagan philosophy. "An old woman," he once said, "knew more of saving grace than Plato." His sermons, sincere, tempestuous and rough in their eloquence, attracted enormous crowds. He was the new sensation, the new thrill, the new amusement, in a city that ran after every new thing.

The church of San Marco soon became too small for him and he continued his sermons in the cathedral, which was crowded with people every time he spoke. He denounced the iniquities of the city and he denounced the iniquities of the Church. For Rome, where Roderigo Borgia was reigning as Pope

Alexander VI, he had even more bitter words than he had for Florence.

The attitude of Lorenzo de' Medici to Savonarola was very characteristic. Lorenzo loved his city; he desired that Florence should have the best of everything; the finest library, the finest pictures, the finest preacher. It was his habit to attend Savonarola's sermons, to smile gently at his attacks, and to contribute handsomely to his collections. Lorenzo's paganism taught him an infinite toleration. On his death-bed the Medici sent for the Dominican. "Three things are required of you," said Savonarola, "to have a full and lively faith in God's mercy, to restore what you have unjustly gained, to give back liberty to Florence." The price was too high and Lorenzo died unshriven.

It was the tragedy of Savonarola's life that events forced him into politics. Charles VIII of France invaded Italy in 1495 and occupied Florence on his way south to Naples. Savonarola interviewed the French king, threatened him with the divine wrath, and persuaded him to withdraw his army. Piero de' Medici had already fled to safety. The Florentines recog-

nized Savonarola as the most capable man in the city and, possibly against his will and better judgment, he established a sort of theocracy with himself as a benevolent despot. He laid down the then revolutionary principle that the aim of government should be the promotion of public welfare and not the protection of private interests. He reduced taxation. He found work for the unemployed and ensured justice for the meaner citizens. His was a great experiment in theocratic socialism. But, unluckily for himself, Savonarola was a Puritan, and Puritanism could not endure for long in Florence.

The laws that were passed were inspired by the friar's sermons, which insisted on a rigidly Puritanical mode of life. Savonarola arranged a great Burning of the Vanities. Licentious books, pictures, jewels, gay dresses were piled up in a great heap and set on fire. But restriction led, as it always does, to reaction, and a growing party among the citizens began to crave for a return to the Medicis with licence once more for cakes and ale. The growing unrest in the city was promptly utilised by Pope Alexander VI, whose evil

life Savonarola had fiercely and persistently denounced. It must not be supposed that Savonarola was a rebel against the Church or even against Church authority. Like almost all the pre-Luther reformers, he remained to the end of his days faithful to Catholic doctrine and practice. Because he loved the Church, his moral indignation was roused by the scandalous lives of Popes and Cardinals and he made a somewhat subtle distinction between the office of Supreme Pontiff and the man who filled it. Alexander VI tried to silence him with flattery, and offered him a Cardinal's hat. Savonarola refused the hat and continued his denunciations. The Pope counted on the pleasure-loving Florentines and was not disappointed. In 1498 the people who had fawned on Savonarola turned against him. He was arrested, strangled and his body burned. Just before his death the Bishop who had condemned him said to him, "I separate you from the Church militant and triumphant." Savonarola answered, "Militant, yes, triumphant, no; that is not yours."

Thirty years after Savonarola's death Florence lost her independence and was incor-

porated in the Duchy of Tuscany, which, from the sixteenth century until the French Revolution, was an appanage of the Empire.

Milan was governed in 1453 by Francesco Sforza, the son of a ploughman who had married into the great Visconti family, one of whom had the pleasant habit of feeding his hounds with human victims. The city was captured by the French in 1500, taken from them by the Emperor Charles V in 1522, and from then till 1714 remained in the possession of the throne of Spain. In the latter year it was handed over to Austria and remained an Austrian possession until Napoleon's invasion of Italy.

At the end of the fourteenth century Venice was the greatest sea power in Europe. Into her harbours came galleys from Constantinople, Alexandria, and all the other eastern Mediterranean ports, laden with the produce of Asia and Africa. Many of the Greek islands were under her rule and she was suzerain of a number of North Italian cities, including Padua and Verona.

After the fall of Constantinople, Venice, whose politics were always commercial, entered

into trade relations with the Turks, but these relations lasted only for a short time, and from 1466 to 1475 the Republic fought the Turkish Empire single-handed. This war seriously strained her resources, and her prosperity and trade monopoly were both affected when Da Gama first rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1486 and opened up a new trade route to the East. In 1509 the League of Cambrai was formed by the Pope, France, Spain, and the Emperor against the city of Venice, and from that time her greatness came gradually but surely to an end. Enough vigour was left to her to fight a series of wars against the Turks, in the course of one of which, in 1571, occurred the battle of Lepanto, perhaps the greatest military achievement of the Renaissance period, in which Cervantes fought on one of the Spanish ships that fought for the Venetians.

An even greater blow to Venetian commerce was caused by the discovery of the New World. When Columbus discovered the possibility of crossing the Atlantic and the Spanish Empire was created in South America, to be followed by the creation of Dutch, French, and English

colonies in North America, the Mediterranean ports lost the supremacy that had been theirs from the dawn of civilization. They became of secondary importance to the ports on the Atlantic seaboard. Venice had been the gateway to the East. She was that no more after Vasco da Gama had sailed round the Cape of Good Hope and had established direct sea communication with Southern Asia; and at the end of the seventeenth century the East had become of far less commercial importance to Europe than the West. Indeed, before the Renaissance had half run its course Venice had ceased to play her great part in the European drama. She gradually lost her overseas possessions, but she retained her independence until Napoleon destroyed the oligarchical government of the Doges and the Council of Ten. Venice was handed over to Austria in 1814.

In 1453 Naples and Sicily were united under the rule of Alfonso of Aragon. In 1495 the city was captured by the French; in 1502 it was in the hands of Spain and Spanish rule lasted till the eighteenth century.

In 1453 Nicholas V, the founder of the

Vatican library and the patron of Fra Angelico, was Pope. He was succeeded during the Renaissance by twenty Pontiffs, most of them utterly unscrupulous and some of them, like Sixtus IV and Alexander VI, the Borgia, monsters of iniquity. But nearly all of them were men of great culture and often of outstanding ability. If they cared little or nothing for religion or morality, they cared a great deal for beauty and art, and the artists of the Renaissance found in the Popes the most appreciative and understanding patrons.

The profligacy of the New Paganism is exhibited in all its sumptuous iniquity in the lives of the Borgias. The Borgias were originally a Spanish family and the first to attain eminence in Italy was Alphonso, Bishop of Valencia, who in 1455 became Pope Calixtus III when he was already seventy-seven years old. He preached a crusade against the Turks and raised his nephew Roderigo Borgia to the Cardinalate. Roderigo was an able, ambitious and extraordinarily patient plotter. His uncle died in 1458 when he was twenty-seven. For thirty-four years Roderigo waited, amassing a great fortune, begetting illegitimate children,

and gradually buying influential support, and in 1492 he, in his turn, ascended the Papal Throne as Alexander VI. With all his sins, and few men have had more, Alexander was a strong ruler. He restored order to Rome, he broke the power of the great families of the Orsini and Colonna, and he set himself to establish a Borgia dynasty in the Vatican, intending that his son Cesare should be his successor. It is not necessary to repeat here the crimes of himself and his son, the poisonings and assassinations, and the intrigues which finished with the poisoning of the Pope himself in 1503. Through the heavily draped scenes of debauchery and crime, there moves the pathetic figure of Lucrezia, the Pope's daughter, maligned by posterity and Victor Hugo—the victim, not the accomplice, of her father and her brother. After her father's death she showed herself a firm and skilful and compassionate ruler, and her last years were devoted to good works.

In his curious apology for Cesare Borgia Mr. Raphael Sabatini suggests that the Borgias were the creatures of their age, no better and no worse than their contemporaries. This

is in itself a sufficient condemnation of the Italy of the Renaissance. Mr. Sabatini says:

"It was an age that had become unable to discriminate between the merits of the Saints of the Church and the Harlots of the Town. Therefore it honoured both alike, extolled the carnal merits of the one in much the same terms as were employed to extol the spiritual merits of the other. Thus when a famous Roman courtesan departed this life in the year 1511, at the early age of twenty-six, she was accorded a splendid funeral and an imposing tomb in the Chapel of Santa Gregoria with a tablet bearing the following inscription:

IMPERIA CORTISANA ROMANA QUAE DIGNA
TANTO NOMINE RARAE INTER MORTALES
FORMAE SPECIMEN DEDIT.

"It was, in short, an age so universally immoral as scarcely to be termed immoral, since immorality may be defined as a departure from the morals that obtained at a given time and in a given place. So that whilst from our own standpoint the Cinquecento, taken collectively, is an age of grossest licence

and immorality, from the standpoint of the Cinquecento itself few of its individuals might with justice be branded immoral.

"For the rest, it was an epoch of reaction from the Age of Chivalry; an epoch of unbounded luxury, of the cult and worship of the beautiful externally; an epoch that set no store by any inward virtue, by truth or honour; an epoch that laid it down as a maxim that no inconvenient engagement should be kept if opportunity offered to evade it."

Cesare Borgia died when he was thirty-two. Ten years earlier, thanks to his own character and to the influence of his father, he had begun to play a leading part in the bloody intrigues of fifteenth-century Italy. He was, Mr. Sabatini tells us, acknowledged to be the handsomest man of his age. He had remarkable physical strength, acute intelligence and tireless industry. He was an able administrator, at Rimini, for example, contriving order out of chaos, and when it suited his purpose he treated the commonalty with some measure of justice. But for all this it is difficult for a modern to see in Cesare Borgia, despite the admiration of Machiavelli, anything but a

ruthless and reckless pinchbeck Napoleon, garbed in gaudy raiment and playing a futile part for a few years on a comparatively small stage.

On the whole, the Renaissance Popes materially aided in the dismemberment of Italy and in her subjection to the foreign rule that lasted until modern times.

In the Middle Ages Italian cities and Italian States were generally under Italian rule, but the Renaissance made Northern Italy the cockpit in which foreign armies contended for the mastery of Europe; it aggravated disunion, saw the gradual decadence of famous cities and marked the beginning of the Italian subjection to Austria and Spain which was not completely brought to an end until the destruction of the Hapsburg Empire in 1918. In the sixteenth century Italy had already become a mere geographical expression. In France, in England, in Spain, and in the Netherlands, the Renaissance was the time when nationalism was firmly established and national independence assured. During this same period of history, Italy was dismembered, weakened, and to a large extent made subject to alien rule.

Though, during the Renaissance, the Italian States lost their political importance, it was a Renaissance Italian philosopher who elaborated the political philosophy that vastly influenced the course of European history until the end of the eighteenth century. Machiavelli's *The Prince* may be roughly summarized as the philosophy of Absolutism. Its principles were followed during the Renaissance by the Valois in France and by the Tudors in England, and, after the Renaissance had run its course, a popular revolt against Machiavellian government brought Charles I to the scaffold in England and Louis XVI to the scaffold in France, after the theories enunciated in *The Prince* had been carried into practice with magnificent success by Louis XVI.

Machiavelli was born in Florence in 1469, and was appointed Secretary to the Chancellery soon after the martyrdom of Savonarola. He was engaged on many delicate diplomatic missions during the years that Florence was threatened on the one hand by the French army, and on the other by the mercenary army fighting for Cesare Borgia. He endeavoured in vain to rekindle the Florentines' civic

ambition so that they might be ready to defend themselves with their own right arm rather than with the aid of hired troops, and for some time he was the Florentine ambassador at Cesare Borgia's Court.

The death of Pope Alexander VI robbed his son Cesare Borgia of his political importance in one swift dramatic moment. The Papal Throne was ascended by Julius II, who was a bitter enemy of the Borgia family, but Florence continued to be threatened, first by the Emperor Maximilian and then in the war between the Pope and the king of France. After a time Medici rule was restored and Machiavelli lost his official position and was tortured and imprisoned. He was subsequently released by an act of amnesty when Leo X became Pope. During the next few years, living in poverty and retirement, he worked out the basis of his political philosophy and wrote his great book. In 1521 Machiavelli returned to public life, and after further notable service to his city, he died in June 1527.

We have before referred to Mr. H. G. Wells' denunciation of Machiavelli's political philosophy. The man himself is an interesting

figure. He was a patriot and he was a realist. It is not without interest that Macaulay, the Whig, said of him: "His works were misrepresented by the learned, misconstructed by the ignorant, censured by the Church. The name of the statesman whose genius had illuminated all the dark places of policy and to whose patriotic wisdom an oppressed people owed their last chance of freedom passed into a proverb of infamy."

Machiavelli was convinced that the essential quality of the successful ruler was strength, and while he could describe Cesare Borgia as "a man without compassion, rebellious to Christ, a basilisc, a hydra, deserving of the most wretched end," he declared that in an age of weakness and vacillation, Cesare was at least the possessor of talent, determination, decision, and courage, and in *The Prince* he insisted that these are the necessary qualities for successful rule, and consequently for the happiness of the people, since by nothing is this happiness more threatened than by inefficiency in high places. In his *The Renaissance,* the French philosopher, Gobineau, who anticipated Nietzsche in the doctrine of the

superman, makes Machiavelli predict that Italy, condemned to bear " the yoke of petty despots and street-corner tyrants," might be saved " by the corrupt cleverness and audacity of Cesare Borgia." For the common run of men and for any sort of idealism, Machiavelli had nothing but contempt. Savonarola had gone to the stake because he was an idealist and for his perverse belief in a goodness which did not exist. It is necessary that men shall be ruled rigorously for their own good, and the ruler, the superman, cannot be expected to submit to the morality that is suitable for the herd. This side of Machiavelli's philosophy is not unfairly summarized by Gobineau when he makes Pope Alexander say to his daughter Lucrezia Borgia :

" Know then that for that kind of persons whom fate summons to dominate others, the ordinary rules of life are reversed and duty becomes quite different. Good and evil are lifted to another, to a higher region, to a different plane. The virtues that may be applauded in an ordinary woman would in you become vices, merely because they would only be sources of error and ruin. Now the

great law of this world is, not to do this or that, to avoid one thing and run after another; it is to live, to enlarge and develop one's most active and lofty qualities, in such a way that from any sphere we can always hew ourselves out a way to one that is wider, nobler, more elevated. Never forget that. Walk straight on. Do only what pleases you, but only do it if it likewise serves you. Leave to the small minds, the rabble of underlings, all slackness and scruple."

The Machiavellian philosophy was the result of the new paganism. Machiavelli was honestly and definitely anti-Christian. The idea of the brotherhood of man, which was the basis of Savonarola's crusade, appeared to him merely ridiculous. The restrictions adumbrated in the teachings of Christ were impossible if men were to be ruled and order assured. You cannot, he said, govern the world with paternosters. It is true that he thought always of the ruler as the servant of the State and not as the State. He insisted that " a prince must win the love of his people." The release from the restrictions of conventional morality was not a personal privilege so much as a necessity for the common good.

"Where the bare salvation of the mother-land is at stake, there no consideration of justice or injustice can find a place, nor any of mere cruelty, or of honour or disgrace; every scruple must be set aside and that plan followed which saves her life and maintains her liberty."

But though Machiavelli himself may have implied that the privileges of the superman were nothing more than essentials for the fulfilling of his responsibilities, it was natural that the would-be autocrat should welcome the philosophy that taught that "failure is the unpardonable sin for a ruler; he must adapt his conduct to circumstances," and that "when men individually, or a whole city together, offend against the State, the prince—for a warning to others and for his own safety—has no other remedy than to exterminate them."

Machiavelli's *The Prince* has had indeed almost as great an effect on the history of the world as Rousseau's *Contrat Social.* The Emperor Charles V, the last effective head of the decadent Holy Roman Empire, was not a Machiavellian. He was a conscientious Christian, not without the mediæval idea of respon-

sibility. But after his death, for two hundred and fifty years Europe was either subject to Machiavellianism or in revolt against it. During the reigns of the later Valois, whose lurid splendours live for us in the romances of Alexandre Dumas, Machiavellianism was ruthlessly practised by the terrifying Queen-mother, Catherine de Medici. Henry IV, when he changed his religion and declared that a throne was worth a Mass, was definitely following Machiavelli's teaching. Richelieu and Louis XIV, Henry VIII and Elizabeth, Frederick the Great of Prussia, all might have founded, and probably did found, their policy on the teachings of *The Prince*. Bismarck was the perfect Machiavellian, and Europe was not freed from Machiavellianism—if it be free now—until the Hohenzollern Empire was destroyed in 1918. The greatest of all the figures in what may be called the Machiavelli tradition is Napoleon.

The first political achievement of the Renaissance was the development of a clear-cut theory of autocracy derived from a definitely pagan and anti-Christian contempt of the common people. The pity and the sympathy

inherent in Christianity, despite the vices of highly-placed Churchmen, found their immortal expression in the life and teachings of St. Francis at the end of the Middle Ages. For a time, during the Renaissance, pity and sympathy were almost entirely lost. The new light, indeed, cast a darker shadow over the lives of the common people.

The hundred and fifty years of the Renaissance were a sadder time for France than for almost any other part of Europe. Louis XI died in 1483, having partially succeeded in crippling the power of the dukes and establishing the authority of the throne. The reign of Francis I, a typical Renaissance sovereign, with a love of letters and with a love of splendour demonstrated on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, was overshadowed by his defeat at Pavia by Charles V and his subsequent imprisonment. During the reigns of his son and three grandsons France was torn asunder by the Wars of Religion which culminated in the horror of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. In 1589, Henry of Navarre again gave France capable rule, ensuring something like order and prosperity. But

the Renaissance had almost run its course when Henry became king and he did little more than prepare the way for the unifying and constructing achievement of the great Cardinal Richelieu. The effect of the long years of civil strife was that the literary and artistic output of France in the Renaissance was, as we shall see, far less considerable than that of Renaissance Italy and England.

The English Edward IV was a man of learning, commercial shrewdness, and Machiavellian craft. Feudalism had been weakened by the Wars of the Roses, and while the great lords had been impoverished the burghers had grown richer and, at the same time, politically less influential. With the accession of Edward IV, the sovereign, having no longer to fear the rivalry of great lords, was able to ignore the public opinion of the towns. English freedom had indeed, as Green says, been " won with the sword of the barons," and with the destruction of the power of the feudal lords political freedom in England temporarily came to an end. The Church was still powerful, but it feared the progress of heresy and was anxious to add to rather

than to take away from the authority of the king. The middle classes, fearing a repetition of the popular revolt of the fourteenth century, were indifferent to the growth of absolutism and looked to the sovereign as the only protector against social chaos. Edward's own personal interest in trade added to his popularity with this class. As for the labourers, the unhappy descendants of the men of Merrie England, never were they more miserable than in this glorious Renaissance period. Their small holdings had been taken from them, arable land had become pasture, and the countryside was filled with sullen discontent which now and again led to futile revolt. Edward himself was able, pitiless, ruthless, subtle, treacherous, immoral, handsome, gay and attractive in his manner; he patronized learning and aided Caxton to set up his printing press at Westminster; he traded on a vast scale and his own ships carried cargoes of wool and cloth to the ports of Italy and Greece.

The development of absolute rule in England, which Edward IV began, was carried on by the Tudor sovereigns, all of whom were able, and three of whom, Henry VII, Henry VIII,

and Elizabeth, were as unscrupulous as Machiavelli himself could have desired. The principle of their rule was summarised by their feeble imitator James I, who said, "As it is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do; so it is presumption and high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do, or say that a king cannot do this or that."

Henry VII was suspicious, greedy, and consequently highly unpopular, and when Henry VIII, a talented, handsome boy of eighteen, ascended the throne in 1509 in the full spring of the Renaissance, he was hailed, not only by the common people, but also by the acutest men of the time, among them Erasmus and Thomas More, as a harbinger of a new and happier era. Their high hopes were soon disappointed. The young king dreamt of recovering the English possessions in France lost during the reign of Henry VI. Before fighting France he allied himself with the Emperor Charles V by his marriage with the Emperor's sister, Katherine of Aragon. The campaign against France was hotly denounced by Dean Colet, one of the fine

figures of the age, who, attacking what was then the novel theory of "royal by divine right," spoke scornfully of kings called "invincible though they fly from every battlefield." J. R. Green says that this famous sermon of Dean Colet's was "the first time in modern history that religion had formally dissociated itself from the ambition of princes and the horrors of war," and he suggests that the protest was the result of the New Learning, the outcome of the Renaissance spirit. If modern history is regarded as beginning with the fall of Constantinople, Green's assertion is incorrect, because Savonarola had denounced the Medici years before Colet denounced Henry VIII. The implied suggestion that the Church had in the Middle Ages acquiesced in all the privileges of princes is manifestly untrue. The fact is that the short and ridiculous war which culminated in the bloodless Battle of Spurs was a new kind of war in European history. The wars fought in France by Edward III and Henry V were not fought by those sovereigns as kings of England, but as the possessors of large territories in France, which gave them

the right to bid for the French throne. They fought as Frenchmen, not as Englishmen. But Henry VIII was Harry of England. He believed as firmly as Louis XIV that "I am the State," and it was the State of England whose power he was anxious to aggrandize. This implies a new idea of nationalism in the west of Europe. The three great powers, England, France and Spain, were each determined that neither of the other two should grow too strong, and the doctrine of the Balance of Power, the fertile source of constant war with its consequent suffering and death, came into being.

Cardinal Wolsey, whose rise to power coincided with the war against France, was as determined a peace minister in the sixteenth century as Robert Walpole was in the eighteenth. He re-established good relations with France and did nothing to hinder the French scheme of conquest in Northern Italy, in fact he actually encouraged France, possibly realizing that in the long run the result would be the weakening rather than the strengthening of her political power. Wolsey's success in monopolizing all authority within the

English realm had important results. As Chancellor he was head of the administration of the law; as the king's principal adviser he vastly influenced both foreign and home politics; and as Papal Legate he was practically supreme head of the Church. Wolsey was a man of tremendous industry and amazing capacity, and this able, long-sighted minister persistently proclaimed himself the servant of the king. It was largely to his capacity that Tudor absolutism owed its creation, while the fact that the King's man was also the Pope's man and that appeals hitherto made to the international authority at Rome were now made to a national minister at Hampton Court, was the preparation for public acquiescence in Henry's later disavowal of papal authority, even though the English with their traditional dislike of foreign interference were offended by Wolsey's acceptance of the foreign title of Cardinal.

The political history of the Renaissance is intimately bound up with the Reformation, to which another chapter of this book is devoted. Here it is only necessary to point out that Henry VIII's part in the Reformation

was entirely personal and political; he had no quarrel with either the doctrine or the practice of the Catholic Church. Rome barred the way when he wearied of Katherine of Aragon and desired to marry Anne Boleyn. To a man who believed that it was "presumption and high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do," it was intolerable that any outside authority should prevent the fulfilment of a king's desire. There is much in the history of the Papacy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that is deplorable. This makes it the more necessary to remember that the break with Rome, brought about, not by the English people, but by the English king, could have been avoided if Rome had promptly agreed to Henry's divorce. In 1534 the king declared himself Head of the Church. In 1535 Sir Thomas More, the finest of all the figures in the English Renaissance, was executed for refusing to accept the doctrine, accepted neither by faithful Catholics nor by rebellious Protestants, of a local, lay-directed Church.

Henry VIII had been urged to secure his divorce by a break with Rome, in imitation

of "the princes of Germany who had thrown off the papal yoke," under the inspiration of Luther, by Thomas Cromwell, who had been one of Wolsey's secretaries. After his master's fall Cromwell went for a while to Italy, returning home with his head full of Machiavellian statecraft and with the ambition to transplant to England the reckless magnificence of the Italian Courts. Henry was grateful for the suggestion that enabled him to marry Anne Boleyn with some show of legality, and he eagerly listened to Cromwell's schemes for adding to the power and wealth of the throne. The schemes could never have been carried out without a subservient parliament. It was necessary to pack both Lords and Commons with the king's creatures and promptly to destroy all opposition. "Do what the king does, repeat what he says," was Cromwell's command, and death was the penalty for disobedience even though the offender were as highly born as Lady Salisbury or as pious and learned as Thomas More. A subservient parliament meant the spending of money. The members had to be bought.

The monasteries were rich, and it was to

the monasteries that Cromwell looked with hungry eyes. Thomas Cromwell was a most complete scoundrel. For ten years he terrorized England. The great, far-reaching changes for which he was responsible were hated and detested by the English people. But the country was silent; the people were afraid to speak; and, as Green has pointed out, Cromwell was equally successful in terrorizing the king by constantly telling him of plots against his throne and person, not a quarter of which ever existed. Having established this universal terror he was free to carry out his great scheme of making the throne all-powerful. He destroyed the monasteries in order to create a new nobility, that would be the willing tool of the Crown.

During the Middle Ages the monasteries had played a glorious part in the life of the people. They were the schools, the hospitals, the workhouses, and the inns where the traveller was sure of board and lodging. The abbots were generally kind and sympathetic landlords. The wealth of the monasteries was largely spent in the university education of poor scholars. No one will deny that

as the monasteries grew rich their good works were accompanied by countless abuses, and the new intellectual freedom of the Renaissance led to bitter criticism of monastic prejudice and ignorance. Rabelais shouted his full-blooded laughs at the cloistered life. Erasmus wrote sarcastically of the "lovers of darkness." Sir Thomas More admitted monkish abuses. But no one, for one moment, believes to-day that it was the sins of the English monks that led to the suppression of the English monasteries. Coldly, methodically, ruthlessly, the monks were driven from their houses and their goods were sequestrated. Resistance meant death. For the most part the English people watched the destruction in sullen, terrified silence, but in the north of England there was a popular rising against the royal authority, called the Pilgrimage of Grace, which Cromwell sternly and promptly repressed.

The new nobility enriched by the despoiling of the monasteries were years afterwards heavily taxed by Elizabeth. They were expected by that masterful queen to perform important and expensive public services and

to defray the cost out of their own pockets. The national exchequer was empty, the purses of the new nobility were very full, and it seemed to Elizabeth, always a realist, that they should pay something out of the loot given them in her father's lifetime. Fifty years later they had their revenge, for it was the class enriched by Henry VIII that sent Charles I to the scaffold.

In addition to enriching subservient servants of the Crown, a part of the spoils taken from the Church was used in the endowment of six new bishoprics, in founding a certain number of professorships at the Universities and in establishing grammar schools. But these small benefits were a poor compensation for the loss caused to the nation by Cromwell's policy, and the loss was far more than religious or even philanthropic. In her *History of the People of England*, Miss Alice Drayton Greenwood says: "If the shock of the disillusion to reverence and religious feeling was terrible, the wasted beauty was as great, and a heavy blow was dealt at justice, at charitable kindness, and at social order. Builders, carvers, painters, bell founders, metal

workers and embroiderers found themselves without a market or prospect; they could no longer train pupils, and the arts for which England has been famous, and which had placed in every town many instances of lovely handiwork, and in every village at least one, died out, while music too, was maimed. Musical instruments and bells, and even singing in church, might, like written manuscripts, be suspected as superstitious."

Hallam says: "Those families within or without the bounds of the peerage who are now deemed the most considerable, will be found, with no great number of exceptions, to have first become conspicuous under the Tudor line of kings, and if we could trace the title of their estates, to have acquired no small portion of them mediately or immediately from monastic or other ecclesiastical foundations."

Cromwell terrorized England and forced the nation implicitly to obey the king. Parliament was his creature. To disobey was to die. He reduced, Green says, bloodshed to a system. The Act of Succession passed in 1534 called on all loyal subjects to declare

their belief in the validity of Henry VIII's divorce, and this Act was used by Cromwell as the pretext for the execution of many pious Churchmen. A revolt in the North against the suppression of the monasteries was crushed with rigorous cruelty. Abbots were hanged on gibbets, great ladies were burned at the stake. The king's will, however freakish it might be, was supreme. The break with Rome made it an international necessity for England to cultivate the friendship of the German Protestant princes, and this compelled Cromwell to become the patron of the English Protestants and to permit, if he did not encourage, the dragging down of the images of the Virgin and of the saints from many English parish churches. But Henry would have no tampering with traditional Catholic belief and the Six Articles which summarized the faith of the English Church, of which the king was now head, emphasized the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Cromwell's power lasted until 1543, when he contrived a marriage for his master with an ugly German princess and lost his own head.

Cromwell fell, as the ministers of autocrats

always fall. But he had broken the power of the Church. Henceforward to the death of Elizabeth the Church echoed what the sovereign said. In the short reign of Edward VI the Church was anti-Roman, in the reign of Queen Mary it was Roman, in the reign of Elizabeth once more it was anti-Roman; but all through this sixteenth century the law was: "vox regis vox dei." Henry VIII beheaded men who declared that the king could not be the head of the Church, the ministers of Edward VI executed men and women who declined to disavow their Catholic belief; Queen Mary burned Protestants, Queen Elizabeth burned Catholics and harried Protestant dissenters who denied royal authority.

The short reign of Queen Mary, who married Philip of Spain, saw England tied in international affairs to the Spanish monarchy, now swollen in wealth and power by the conquests in South America. The first voyage of Columbus across the Atlantic and the subsequent expeditions by Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and English adventurers had both an intellectual and a political result in the Europe

of the sixteenth century. The conquests of Mexico by Cortez and of Peru by Pizarro are among the great epics of human endurance and persistence; and cruel as the Spanish conquerors unquestionably were, there is no doubt of the ability of their leaders and the skill and courage of the Spanish soldier.

In the middle of the sixteenth century Philip of Spain held the Netherlands, was paramount in a large part of Italy, had great political influence in Germany, and owned the Americas. The whole object of Elizabeth's statecraft was to break the power of Spain. This power was almost as great a menace to France, but the tremendous Catholic antipathy to Elizabeth made it almost impossible for the French sovereigns to ally themselves with England. German princes were unreliable allies and the Dutch were unable to play any large part in the struggle. Persistently and astutely Elizabeth plotted to break Spain. To this end she patronized, and then disavowed, Drake and the other great Elizabethan adventurers. To this end she used the entirely Machiavellian statecraft of Burleigh and his brother Cecil. Her end

was achieved when the Spanish Armada was destroyed. This great event was the beginning of England's real international importance; it was the beginning of the mastery of the seas that was to be the greatest factor in international quarrels until the present day—until, that is, the invention of the aeroplane.

The politics and religion of the Renaissance had their dramatic culmination in the fierce antagonism between Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots. I have said that Elizabeth was a child of the Italian Renaissance, but in a sense Mary stands even more intimately in relation to the Italy of the Medicis. Sent as a child of six to the Court of France, she not only learned all the accomplishments of her age, but also acquired the "unmorality" characteristic of the Valois as it was of the Borgias. Clever, beautiful, arrogant, ruthless, unswerving in her loyalty to her religion, there is something infinitely attractive in the figure of the girl Queen home again in Scotland after thirteen years absence, an exile in her own country, pitting her wiles and woman's wit against the stern determination

of John Knox. Just as Elizabeth had found herself the protagonist of Protestantism against her will, accepting the position as a political necessity, so it was fate that made Mary the protagonist of Catholicism in Great Britain, and ultimately brought her to the scaffold at Fotheringay Castle. Elizabeth had no scruples, but there was no act in her long reign which she took with greater reluctance than her consent to the execution of her cousin. The two women were typical of the great struggle that was going on in the world. Mary was beautiful, reckless and impetuous. Elizabeth was plain, patient and long-sighted, and it is one of the endless ironies of history that the execution of Mary secured the English throne to her son James I and prepared the way for the Stuart drama of the seventeenth century.

Elizabeth stimulated national self-love. She might also be described as the mother of English patriotism. "Nothing," she said, "nothing, no worldly thing under this sun is so dear to me as the love of my subjects." She loved England, she treasured her unparalleled popularity, but she was absolutely

indifferent to religious controversies. In this she was as characteristically Renaissance as Henry IV of France. Religion to her was a question of policy. The Pope was the ally of Spain and Spain was her enemy, and political events forced her to rely on the Protestants for support and to patronize Protestantism, with which she had little or no sympathy. England's oversea trade increased enormously during the reign of Elizabeth and there was a corresponding improvement in the standard of comfort among the richer classes. Fortunes were easily made by the adventurers who sailed to the Spanish Main, and luxury became the rule of life. But at the same time the majority of the people were infinitely less well off when Elizabeth died than they had been two hundred years before. The craft guilds were destroyed soon after the dissolution of the monasteries. With the power of the guilds behind them the town labourers had thriven and prospered at a time when the peasant was able to acquire his own land and become a small freeholder. All this was changed during the Renaissance. For the wage-earner a new tyranny had been invented.

" He was handed over to the mercy of his master at a time when he was utterly incapable of resisting the grossest tyranny. Justices in quarter-sessions were empowered to check any discontent and if necessary to starve the people into submission. Their object was to get labour at starvation wages."

Briefly to summarize the political history of the Renaissance, it was the period of the consolidation of the three Western monarchies, France, Spain and England, and the development of autocratic power. At the beginning of the Renaissance a great part of Spain was still occupied by the Moors and the aspiration of her people was to free the country from the alien invader. At the end of the Renaissance Spain, despite the defeat of her Armada, was the most powerful Empire in the world. Her cohesion was practically unaffected by the Reformation, and her possessions still included a great part of the Netherlands and the whole of colonized South America. At the beginning of the Renaissance the unity of France under the unchallengeable authority of the king was gradually being established by Louis XI, but during the

hundred years that followed, the country was again torn asunder by the religious wars. At the end unity and authority were again restored by Henry IV, destiny having appointed Richelieu to carry on in the seventeenth century the work that Henry IV began in the sixteenth. Autocracy was established in England during the Renaissance, only to be destroyed by the Puritan revolution. The foundations of a great empire were firmly laid by Elizabeth, the country was torn away from communion with the Latin Church mainly by the ambition of its sovereigns, and in an age of great material and literary glory there was a universal deterioration in the standard of comfort of the mass of the people. On the other hand, during the later Renaissance the English people began for the first time generally to read the Bible, with the double result of the creation of a characteristically English culture that remains to this day, and of the development of English Puritanism which was to find immortal expression in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and which, although it never affected more than a minority of the people, has vastly influenced the course

of human history both in England and America.

In Italy the Renaissance was a period of artistic and literary magnificence, of moral degradation, and, politically, of gradual subjection to foreign rule. In Germany the Renaissance means the Reformation, which certainly brought in its hand not peace but a sword. The intermittent wars between Protestants and Catholics in the sixteenth century were the prelude to the Thirty Years' War of the seventeenth century, when Germany was invaded and harried by Gustavus Adolphus and his Swedes. So miserable was the condition of the German people that in 1525 there was a serious peasant rising, ruthlessly suppressed, the suppression being warmly supported by Luther who urged the princes to "strangle and stab them (the peasants) as a man would treat a mad dog."

THE new enthusiasm for Platonism, with which was mixed a good deal of crude mysticism, the throw-back, that is to say, to the philosophy of fifteen centuries before, caused in the fifteenth century a curious and most suggestive disregard of the literature of the Middle Ages. It was Plato, Cicero, Homer, and Virgil that attracted the enthusiasm of Renaissance scholars, while Dante, the greatest of all Italian poets, the father of Italian literature, seems to have been entirely neglected both in Florence and in Rome. This neglect is extremely significant because Dante is the great poet of the Christian Faith, and the New Learning, at least in the Italy of the early Renaissance, was to a large extent a revolt against that faith. But we cannot forget that when the Renaissance began, Italy already possessed a great national literature. Dante died in 1321, leaving to his country the greatest

possession of its literature, a poem of matchless grandeur, in which all the dreams and aspirations of the Middle Ages found immortal expression. Boccaccio, the father of Italian prose, died in 1375. The stories in his *Decameron*, unrivalled for generations, vastly influenced Chaucer. Petrarch died in 1374. As J. A. Symonds has said: "Had the revival of learning never occurred it is probable the efforts of these three writers, the last of whom died eighty years before the fall of Constantinople, would have inaugurated a new age of European culture." As a matter of fact, the new-born enthusiasm for the classics, stimulated in Italy by the arrival of Greek scholars from Constantinople, and flourishing most conspicuously under the patronage of the Medici at Florence, led to an abandonment of the Italian tradition of Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch for the writing of stilted poetry in Latin, and to a pedantic adherence to classical forms. It is common to call the years between 1470 and 1530 the Golden Age of the Italian Renaissance, and it is remarkable that great as were Italian achievements in those years in the arts of painting and sculpture, only two of

the many Italian writers of the time contrived to make any important contribution to world literature. The names of Poliziano, Sannazaro, Pontano, Boiardo, and Bembo convey absolutely nothing nowadays to any but the professionally cultured. One just knows the names of Bandello's *Novello* because one of his stories suggested the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* to Shakespeare, and another the plot of *Twelfth Night.*

But of them all Machiavelli and Ariosto alone have European importance. I have written of Machiavelli's *The Prince* in another chapter. Lodovico Ariosto, the author of *Orlando Furioso,* was born in 1474. His father died when he was sixteen and Lodovico found himself burdened with the care of five sisters and four brothers. He entered the service of the Cardinal D'Este, with whom he remained for fourteen years, being engaged on various diplomatic missions at an extremely small salary which he did not always receive. He began writing *Orlando Furioso* in 1505 and it was finished ten years later. The poem was an immense success and gave him both fame and independence, and the plays he subsequently wrote added to his reputation. In 1522 Ariosto

was appointed governor of a wild district in the Apennines where he spent three dull, dreary years. On one occasion he was captured by a band of brigands; when their leader learned his name he apologized for molesting the author of *Orlando,* and he and his men escorted the poet back to his castle. Such—so says the legend—was the love of poetry in the Golden Age. The last years of the poet's life were spent in comparatively prosperous content, though it was often his lot to prove that princes promised more than they fulfilled. He once wrote: "A caged nightingale is never happy, and even a day's captivity will kill a swallow. If a man desires to become a knight or a cardinal, it is for him to bow down before kings or popes; but as for me I have no wish for such honours; sweeter is the taste of a turnip in my own home than a feast in that of my lord."

¶ In writing *Orlando Furioso* Ariosto was influenced by the *Chanson de Roland* as well as by Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* It begins with the lines:—

> Of ladies and of knights, of love and arms,
> Of courtesy and of brave deeds I sing.

Its plot is of the most complicated. To quote Mr. Christopher Hare:—

"Thus at one moment, we are in a stately company of great princes and warriors preparing for war, then we are carried off to an enchanted palace, to a magic fountain, next we are in the midst of a fierce battle, or a storm at sea; now a tragedy, then a comedy; there is dancing, singing, love-making; we go down into the depths of the earth or we soar in a hippogriff to the moon, while we are always coming across magic and enchantment, and the fascinating presence of that Queen of coquettes, Angelica, flits ever before us, constantly followed by some adoring knight-errant, from whom she may escape by placing the magic ring within her lips and becoming invisible, to the bewilderment of her lovers."

Ariosto's art, as has been well said, is the art of tapestry, and the only English poet with whom he can be compared is Spenser. *Orlando Furioso* was translated into English by the Elizabethan Sir John Harrington. Space forbids me to attempt any sort of detailed description of the poem, and one short quotation will

suffice. Orlando discovers that Angelica has been unfaithful to him :—

> Orlando falls starke mad, with sorrow taken
> To hear his mistress hath him quite forsaken.

He hacks the trees and stones with his sword, finally casts off his armour and throws away his helmet, crying out :—

> " I am not I, the man that erst I was,
> Orlando, he is buried and is dead.
> His most ungrateful love (ah foolish lasse !)
> Hath killed Orlando and cut off his head.
> I am his ghost that up and down must pass
> In this tormenting dell for ever led,
> To be a fearful sample and a just
> To all such fooles as put in love their trust."

The only other really notable Italian poet of the sixteenth century was Torquato Tasso, who was born in 1544 and did not commence to write till long after the Golden Age had come to an end. Torquato Tasso was the son of a courtier who was brought up, to quote J. A. Symonds, " in an atmosphere of refined luxury and somewhat pedantic criticism." When he was thirty he completed his poem *Jerusalem Delivered*. The subject was the First Crusade and Virgil is the model. Soon after the completion of this work Tasso became mentally

deranged, and spent his time journeying through Italy from town to town, "wandering like the world's rejected guest." He died in Rome in 1595.

There are two great names in the French literature of the Renaissance: François Rabelais and Michel de Montaigne. In the writings of both these Frenchmen the modern reader is able to discover the distinctive mind of the Renaissance far more clearly than it can be found in the Italians. The Renaissance was a period of abounding vitality, of courage, of learning, of contempt for immediate tradition, of resentment against the shackling of the spirit and the mind by authority. All these things are expressed with amazing energy and tumultuous glee by Rabelais in his story of the adventures of Pantagruel and Gargantua.

Rabelais was born about 1490 at Chinon in Touraine. The first part of *The Inestimable Life of the Great Gargantua, Father of Pantagruel* was published in 1532. There are two parts of the romance, the father being the hero of the first part, and the son of the second. Rabelais wrote on the fly-leaf of his romance, "Le rire est le propre de l'homme," and the theme which

he expounded was that to laugh is to grow sane and wholesome. There are certain resemblances between Rabelais and Swift, but Swift was a Rabelais without his tremendous jollity, as Coleridge has said, "the soul of Rabelais dwelling in a dry place." Rabelais began life as a Franciscan monk, afterwards transferring to the Benedictines. But he loathed the cloistered life and laughed his loudest at the petty formalism of the monks, and he contrived to be released from the cloister to study medicine at Montpelier, where he took his doctor's degree. Afterwards he went to Rome with Cardinal du Bellay. On his return he was appointed curé of Meudon, and a strange and wonderful curé he must have been!

Rabelais loved words. It must be remembered that when he began to write French prose was in its infancy, it was a new thing, and Rabelais played with it and juggled with it and twisted it into odd patterns. As Mr. Lytton Strachey says: "It is in the multitude of his words that the fertility of Rabelais's spirit most obviously shows itself. His book is an orgy of words; they pour out helter-skelter,

wildly, into swirling sentences and huge catalogues that in serried columns overflow the page."

Rabelais stands for the Renaissance protest against gloom and asceticism. Life, he proclaims, is not a weary preparation but a great and fantastic adventure. The works of Rabelais, Mr. Lytton Strachey says, "seem to belong to the morning of the world—a time of mirth, and a time of expectation." He is almost frankly materialistic, the literary eulogist of "appetite for the good things of the world." But there is, as Professor Saintsbury suggests, more than a hint that satiety follows appetite and that disappointment is the finale of anticipation. Now and again Rabelais breaks off from his laughter seriously to discuss education, or to write the beautiful description of the Abbey of Touraine, the ideal life of which reminds one of More's *Utopia.* Writing of the life of the monks in his dream Abbey, he says:—

"All their life was spent not in laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rose out of their beds when they thought good; they did eat, drink,

labour, sleep, when they had a mind to it, and were disposed for it. None did awake them, none did offer to constrain them to eat, drink, nor do any other thing; for so had Gargantua established it. In all their rule and strictest tie of their order there was but this one clause to be observed :—

" Do What Thou Wilt.

" Because men that are free, well-born, well-bred, and conversant in honest companies, have naturally an instinct and spur that prompteth them unto virtuous actions, and withdraws them from vice, which is called honour. Those same men, when by base subjection and constraint they are brought under and kept down, turn aside from that noble disposition by which they formerly were inclined to virtue, to shake off and break that bond of servitude wherein they are so tyrannously enslaved; for it is agreeable with the nature of man to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied us.

" By this liberty they entered into a very laudable emulation to do all of them what they saw did please one : if any of the gallants or

ladies should say, 'Let us drink,' they would all drink; if anyone of them said, 'Let us play,' they all played; if one said, 'Let us go a-walking in the fields,' they went all; if it were to go a-hawking or a-hunting, the ladies mounted upon dainty, well-paced nags, seated in a stately palfrey saddle, carried on their lovely fists, miniardly begloved, every one of them, either a sparrow-hawk or a lanaret or a marlin; and the young gallants carried the other kinds of hawks. So nobly were they taught, that there was neither he nor she amongst them but could read, write, sing, play upon several musical instruments, speak five or six several languages, and compose in them all very quaintly, both in verse and prose. Never were seen so valiant knights, so noble and worthy, so dexterous and skilful both on foot and horseback, more brisk and lively, more nimble and quick, or better handling all manner of weapons, than were there. Never were seen ladies so proper and handsome, so miniard and dainty, less forward, or more ready with their hand, and with their needle, in every honest and free action belonging to that sex; than were there: for this reason, when the time came that any

man of the said abbey, either at the request of his parents or for some other cause, had a mind to go out of it, he carried along with him one of the ladies—namely, her whom he had before that chosen for his mistress, and were married together; and if they had formerly in Theleme lived in good devotion and amity, they did continue therein and increase it to a greater height in their state of matrimony, and did entertain that mutual love till the very last day of their life in no less vigour and fervency than at the very day of their wedding."

Though Rabelais is hard to read from his love of torrents of words and his use of a language that is all his own, there are many passages in his book that have become proverbial. For example:—

"How shall I be able to rule over others, that have not full power and command over myself?"

"So much is a man worth as he esteems himself."

"I believe he would take three bites of a cherry."

"One inch of joy surmounts of grief a span,
Because to laugh is proper to the man."

"Appetite comes with eating."

"He that hath patience may encompass anything."

"The belly has no ears, nor is it to be filled with fair words."

"The Devil was sick—the Devil a monk would be;
The Devil was well—the Devil a monk was he."

[Montaigne was born in the year in which *Gargantua* was published. He grew up in an atmosphere of disappointment and disillusion. It was clear that the great hopes of the early Renaissance were doomed. France was torn asunder by the wars of religion. There was no justification for loud laughter, there was no reasonable basis for optimism. Montaigne was born and lived at Bordeaux, was educated for the law, was appointed to the judicial bench, and retired from office when he was thirty-eight. He began to write his essays in 1580. He was a man of moderate opinions, holding to the old religion, but with no desire to persecute the new. He was appointed mayor of Bordeaux and served the city with distinction. He died in 1592. More, perhaps, than any other writer Montaigne set the classical tradition for French prose.

The philosophy of the *Essais* is a well-bred agnosticism. Montaigne writes about himself, he writes about the vanity of life, he writes about the qualities necessary for a successful ruler, he writes about friendship. And always he is moderate, always he is the humanist. As one reads Montaigne one thinks sometimes of Erasmus and Sir Thomas More, but he had none of their enthusiasm. It is impossible to believe that he would have gone to the stake rather than admit that Henry VIII was head of the English Church. One rather fancies that Montaigne would have considered it a matter of small moment whether he were or not. Scepticism in Rabelais was an enthusiasm, in Montaigne it was a gentle habit of mind. He anticipates the unbelief, that was never ill-mannered or assertive, of England in the seventeenth-century Athenian age. He stands for the Renaissance that has lost faith, enthusiasm, almost hope.

Two or three years after Montaigne's death the essays were translated into English by Florio, and there is evidence in many of his plays that Shakespeare read the translation. There is, indeed, in the British Museum a copy

of Florio with what may be Shakespeare's signature on the fly-leaf.

Tolerance, kindliness, sweetness, culture are the notes of Montaigne's essays. He talks always about himself, but there is in his pages none of what Mr. Lytton Strachey has called "the tremendous introspections of Rousseau." "What do I know?" he continually asked. And he never found an answer quite satisfactory to himself. He was not the man to kick against the pricks, but he contrived to combine resignation with self-respect. In one of his essays he quotes an old sailor, who said: "O God, Thou wilt save me, if it be Thy will, and if Thou choosest, Thou wilt destroy me; but, however it be, I will always hold my rudder straight." That is Montaigne.

His essays are himself. When Henry III told him that he liked his books, he replied, "I am my book." It covers almost all human experience. It expresses the whole mind of a kindly man of the world. "One finds in it all that one has ever thought."

Montaigne was a Catholic. Nevertheless, "it is a peevish infirmitie, for a man to thinke himselfe so firmely grounded, as to perswade

himselfe, that the contrarie may not be believed." He disliked the Protestant easy familiarity with the Scriptures.

He hated fanaticism. He was all for a sweet reasonableness :—

" It is ordinarily seene, how good intentions being managed without moderation, thrust men into most vicious effects. In this controversie, by which France is at this instant molested with civill warres, the best and safest side, is, no doubt, that which maintaineth both the ancient religion and policy of the Country. Neverthelesse amongst the honest men that follow it . . . of those I say, divers are seene, whome passion thrusts out of the bounds of reason, and often forceth them to take and follow unjust, violent, and rash counsels."

Montaigne hated cruelty and loathed the horrors of punishment in his day :—

" The Canibales and savage people do not so much offend me with roasting and eating of dead bodies, as those which torment and persecute the living. Let any man be executed by law, how deservedly soever, I cannot endure to behold the execution with an unrelenting eye."

His humanitarianism, indeed, would have been on a high level to-day :—

" As for me, I could never so much as endure, without remorse and griefe, to see a poore, sillie, and innocent beast pursued and killed, which is harmlesse and void of defence, and of whom we receive no offence at all. And as it commonly hapneth, that when the Stag begins to be embost, and finds his strength to faile him, having no other remedie left him, doth yeeld and bequeath himselfe unto us that pursue him, with teares suing to us for mercie,

> With blood from throat, and teares from eyes,
> It seemes that he for pitie cryes,

was ever a grievous spectacle unto me. I seldom take any beast alive, but I give him his libertie. Pythagoras was wont to buy fishes of fishers, and birds of fowlers to set them free againe."

From the volume of his wisdom I select the following characteristic passages :—

Fear.

" Such as are in continuall feare to lose their goods, to be banished, or to be subdued, live

in uncessant agonie and languor; and thereby often lose both their drinking, their eating, and their rest. Whereas the poore, the banished, and seely servants, live often as carelessly and as pleasantly as the other."

Constancy.

"The reputation and worth of a man consisteth in his heart and will: therein consists true honour: Constancie is valour, not of armes and legs: but of mind and courage: it consisteth not in the spirit and courage of our horse, nor of our armes, but in ours."

Glory.

"Of all the follies of the world, the most universall, and of most men received, is the care of reputation, and studie of glorie, to which we are so wedded, that we neglect, and cast-off riches, friends, repose, life and health (goods effectuall and substantiall) to follow that vaine image, and idlie-simple voice, which hath neither body, nor hold-fast."

For Montaigne the whole law and the prophets was summarized in the sentence: "The greatest thing of the world is for a man to know how to be his owne."

. Miguel de Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote* and the one outstanding Spanish literary figure of the Renaissance, was born in 1547. In 1571 he was present at the battle of Lepanto on board one of the ships commanded by Don John of Austria, and during the fight he received three gunshot wounds, two in the chest, and one which permanently maimed his right hand. He continued his military service in Northern Africa, Sicily and Italy until 1575, when on a voyage back to Spain he was captured by a fleet of Barbary corsairs and remained a slave in the hands of the Moors till he was ransomed in 1580. After his return home, he wrote a large number of plays of which only two have survived. In 1587 he was employed in the work of provisioning the Spanish Armada. For the next sixteen years he occupied various small official positions, was badly paid, always in debt, and sometimes in prison.

Don Quixote was published in 1605, but the greater part of it was written before the end of the sixteenth century, and it may therefore be properly regarded as belonging to the last years of the Renaissance. Cervantes himself

declared that his intention was to satirize the romances of chivalry, most of which were written at least two generations earlier, for the age of chivalry may fairly be said to have ended when the Renaissance began. Mr. Fitzmaurice Kelly says :—

" It seems clear that his first intention was merely to parody these extravagances in a short story; but as he proceeded the immense possibilities of the subject became more evident to him, and he ended by expanding his work into a brilliant panorama of Spanish society as it existed during the sixteenth century. Nobles, knights, poets, courtly gentlemen, priests, traders, farmers, barbers, muleteers, scullions and convicts; accomplished ladies, impassioned damsels, Moorish beauties, simple-hearted country girls and kindly kitchen wenches of questionable morals—all these are presented with the genial fidelity which comes of sympathetic insight."

The second part of *Don Quixote* appeared in 1615; the first part was translated into English in 1612. Cervantes died of dropsy in 1616. Few great writers in the whole history of literature ever received less material results

from their work. Cervantes died as he had lived, "a gentleman and poor."

It was, of course, inevitable that at the beginning of the Renaissance Spain should have been affected by Italian classicism, but it is one of the paradoxes of the time that the revival of classical learning, the new interest in the literature of Greece and Rome, was immediately followed in Spain, as in England, and to a smaller extent in France, by the flowering of a definitely national literature. It must be remembered that the Renaissance not only saw the rediscovery of the Old World: it saw the discovery of the New World, and this discovery following the final defeat of the Moors, caused Spain, in less than a century, from being a country largely under alien rule, to become a conquering nation of unchallengeable wealth and power. J. A. Symonds has said, "The characteristics of Spanish Renaissance art and letters, of Velasquez, of Cervantes, and of the dramatists Calderon and Lope de Vega, are their potent national originality." It may be that Cervantes' intention was to satirize the mediæval knight, as it was Rabelais's intention to satirize the

mediæval monk. But the quality of *Don Quixote* is constructive far more than destructive. It is first and foremost, as Mr. Fitzmaurice Kelly says, "a realistic picture not of the life of a dead age, but of the life of the author's own time." Cervantes may have purposed merely to have drawn a figure of fun, but, as happened to Dickens, when he wrote *The Pickwick Papers*, the farcical creation attracted its creator's affections, and just as the world loves Mr. Pickwick, so the world loves Don Quixote, because Cervantes loved Don Quixote as Dickens came to love Mr. Pickwick. Cervantes, more than any other Renaissance writer except Sir Thomas More, justifies the claim that the Renaissance was an age of humanism. Indeed, it was not until Dickens began to write that the world was again reminded that a great fool may be a great gentleman, and that the greatest victories are to be won when a man has the courage and the imagination to tilt at windmills.

Chaucer's is the only great name in later mediæval English literary history, and after his death no poetry of anything more than

archæological interest was written in England till the story of English Renaissance literature begins with Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey, both of whom lived short lives in the first half of the sixteenth century. Wyatt was one of the brilliant young men at the Court of Henry VIII, and the worst that can be said of him is that he was a *protégé* of Thomas Cromwell. Before he was twenty he was sent on diplomatic missions to Italy, where he became intimately acquainted with Italian literature, and was particularly affected by Petrarch. It was Wyatt's distinction to introduce the sonnet into English verse. Both Wyatt and Surrey were as uninterested as Chaucer in involved mediæval allegory, but Wyatt was certainly held in foreign fetters. With the exception of one or two lyrics, there is nothing distinctively English in his Muse, and in his attempt to naturalize what had been a distinctly Italian poetic form, his rhyming was often forced and ugly, as witness the following sonnet which I quote as an example of the difficulties that beset the English writers of the early Renaissance in their pioneer work of creating a literature :—

My galley, charged with forgetfulness,
Through sharpe seas in winter nights doth pass
'Tween rock and rock; and eke my foe, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelness:
And every hour, a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.
And endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forced sighs and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain,
Have done the wearied cords great hinderance;
Wreathed with error and with ignorance,
The stars be hid that led me to this pain;
Drowned is reason that should be my comfort,
And I remain, despairing of the port.

Surrey, who was born in 1517 and was beheaded in 1547, instead of following Wyatt and slavishly imitating the Petrarch sonnet, invented the English form of the sonnet which was afterwards employed by Shakespeare and by Milton.

Edmund Spenser, the second great English poet, was born in 1552 and died before the end of the century. In many respects he is the finest and most attractive of all Elizabethan figures—soldier, courtier and poet. Spenser served in Ireland, and it was during his military service that he wrote a great part of *The Faerie Queene*, an allegory with a moral, to an extent reminiscent of *Orlando Furioso*, and

well described by Andrew Lang as " a guardian of endless varieties of delight, endless but not prolix, for there is a perpetual change of scene and characters and nothing is constant but the long and very varying music of the verse."

Spenser was typically Renaissance in his erudition: he was almost as learned as Rabelais, and there is with him, as with Rabelais, a love of words, some of which are his own creations. He was a far gentler spirit than Rabelais, but in his *Faerie Queene* there is something of the amazing Rabelais vitality, that riots and, indeed, almost blusters, in *Gargantua and Pantagruel.* Towards the end of his life Spenser wrote the *Epithalamion,* his " love-learned song." Until the sun of Shakespeare rose at the very end of the Renaissance, Spenser was its English literary glory. His poetry had a vast influence on the poets who succeeded him. It is easy to find in his verse anticipations both of Shakespeare and of Milton, and again to quote Andrew Lang: " English poetry came fully to her own again when the magic book of Spenser was opened by Keats."

Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* may be regarded

as the first literary result in England of the revival of learning. It was, however, written in Latin and is considered elsewhere.

John Lily, who lived nearly a hundred years later, is interesting because in his *Euphues*, written in English, he invented an involved alliterative and almost incomprehensible style, typical of the Renaissance love of decoration for its own sake.

Sir Philip Sidney was a far more considerable poet. He was the most versatile figure of a versatile period; the most picturesque figure at a time when almost all men were picturesque. Few men have ever crammed so much variety into a life of only thirty-two years. He was in Paris on the night of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew; he met Ronsard in France and Tasso in Italy; he was a diplomat, a member of Parliament and a soldier; and he was killed while fighting with Leicester in the Low Countries. Ben Jonson called him "the god-like Sidney." He was the ideal gentleman of his time, and a writer distinguished both in prose and poetry. In his *Defence of Poesy*, in the true Renaissance spirit, he links literature with life when he

declares that the end of poetry is "to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay lodgings, are capable of." Writing of his poetry, Mr. Arthur Symons says: "The best part of the best sonnets of Sidney have a plain homely rapture which was a new thing in England, and which has remained permanent in the language ever since; the best parts of his best lyrics are not to be matched for force and nobility of passion by any love songs from that time to the time of Browning. He is the complete lover, the perfect youth and knight, the absolute Englishman."

The chief points of interest in considering English Renaissance literature is that while English political power was being built up by adventurers such as Drake and by such subtle statesmen as Elizabeth and Burleigh, a new and distinctive national literature was also being brought into being by Spenser and Sidney who were as absolutely English as Drake himself.

Drama was the great literary achievement of the Elizabethans. It is unnecessary here to consider the work of lesser dramatists, most

of whom would have been properly forgotten but for the uncritical enthusiasm of Swinburne. But if Shakespeare is supremely great among the Elizabethans, the last and most wondrous voice of the Renaissance, only Rabelais and Cervantes being worthy to stand by his side, Christopher Marlowe is also among the greatest, unlucky in having lived in the one age where a greater genius could successfully challenge his pre-eminence. All Marlowe's plays have force and power and splendour. His *Doctor Faustus* is his finest achievement, and Goethe was emphatic in his recognition of its qualities. Blank verse has remained one of the glories of English literature, and the history of blank verse began when Marlowe invented his "mighty line." Without Marlowe there could hardly have been a Shakespeare, and Shakespeare himself never wrote anything finer than the two familiar lines of Marlowe, where he refers to Helen of Troy :—

> Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?

The Renaissance was an era of creation, and Marlowe was a great literary pioneer. The

Renaissance was an era of adventure, and Marlowe was a literary adventurer. His plays are furious with life. He himself lived hard and died young, possibly in a tavern brawl.

It is obviously impossible for me, in this little book, to attempt anything like a detailed appreciation of Shakespeare. All that is necessary for my purpose is to endeavour to indicate his relations to his age, his connection with the definite character of the Renaissance. But it must first be remembered that Shakespeare wrote at the very end of the Renaissance period. If he was its voice at all, he was its last voice. It is true, too, that Shakespeare was the rare genius for whom any one age must be too small. It is the merest truth to say that he belongs to all time. The Renaissance was succeeded in England by a century of moral earnestness, and the English Renaissance itself was essentially moral. Spenser was quite as much a Puritan as Milton. But Shakespeare was a tremendous realist, always sympathetic, but almost entirely unconcerned with morality. Hazlitt says: "Shakespeare was in one sense the least moral of all writers; for morality (commonly so-called) is made up

of antipathies; and his talent consisted in sympathy with human nature in all its shapes, degrees, depressions and elevations." The humanism of Rabelais is the mere shadow of the humanism of Shakespeare; the toleration of Montaigne is nothing to the toleration of Shakespeare. If the Renaissance was a definite revolt against dogmatic condemnations, then Shakespeare was its supreme victor. Shakespeare was too experienced to condemn, too interested not to be eager to find explanations for villainy as well as for virtue. He had the typical Renaissance contempt for asceticism and the ascetic life, a contempt expressed in the beautiful line in which he speaks of cloistered sisters

"Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon."

Falstaff is a character that Rabelais would have loved, and whom Shakespeare obviously loved too, for he dowered the old swashbuckler with wit as well as with greed and rascality. "I am not only witty in myself but the cause that wit is in other men."

Shakespeare, said Professor Raleigh, was a seer and a sceptic. In this respect he is the complete voice of the Renaissance. It was

an age of criticism, an age when traditions and beliefs were abandoned and doubt took the place of faith. In Shakespeare one finds a reflection of the mind of nearly all the outstanding figures of his century. He had the love of colour and splendour that characterized the Medicis and the Italian painters. His laugh, "broad as ten thousand beeves at pasture," as George Meredith described it, reminds one of Rabelais. His tolerance, his sympathetic understanding of men of all kinds and all opinions, and particularly the disillusionment so evident in his later work, all suggest comparison with Montaigne. He was neither Catholic nor Protestant, and he was certainly no Puritan.

If Shakespeare is to be accepted as the final expression of the Renaissance, then it must be agreed that it was indeed a return to the spirit of the classical Greek drama, a re-acceptance of the old dogma that man is the helpless sport of circumstances :—

> "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
> They kill us for their sport."

Men are nothing but "little wanton boys that swim on bladders."

Despite the perfect beauty of its expression, there is complete hopelessness in the Shakespearean philosophy :—

"We are such stuff as dreams are made of."

The Renaissance was born with unbounded hope; it ended with a hopelessness against which seventeenth-century Puritanism was a natural and a human revolt. But it is very remarkable that the resigned fatalism of *The Tempest* should have been written at the end of a century that had seen a vast extension of human activity : the discovery of the New World, the creation of great empires, the diffusion of knowledge. To read the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, written at the beginning of the Middle Ages, and the *Imitation of Christ*, written at the end, and then to read the Shakespearean drama, is again to be filled with doubt as to whether the New Learning, the new knowledge, the great experiments of the Renaissance, had increased in the smallest degree the happiness of the human soul, or man's knowledge of his relations to God and the universe.

Chapter IV The Art of the Renaissance

As the history of modern European literature begins with Dante, so the history of modern European art begins with Dante's contemporary, Giotto, who, moved by the loving humanism of St. Francis, showed himself in his frescoes, to quote Ruskin, " a daring naturalist in defiance of tradition, idealism and formalism."

Byzantine art, the only European art until the fourteenth century, was a thing of hard and definite formalism and conventionality, never expressing the smallest feeling for the beauty of the world. St. Francis looked out on the world and found it lovable. Not only all men, but the birds and the beasts, the wind and the sun, were his little brothers. Giotto looked out on the world and found it beautiful. He was followed by Fra Angelico, Fra Lippo Lippi and Botticelli. Fra Angelico, like St. Francis, was a " little brother of the poor," and it has been

said that "his pictures have the effect of the silent prayer of the child." Lippo Lippi stands on the threshold of the Renaissance; Botticelli definitely belongs to it. He was born in the Florence of the Medicis, the Florence whose intellectual life was saturated with an almost pedantic devotion to classicism. The artist was no longer confined to sacred subjects and church decoration. The new joy in physical life and physical perfection finds expression in Botticelli's *Judith with the Head of Holophernes;* the new delight in Nature and all its adventures is expressed in his *Primavera.* But for all the joyousness of his art Botticelli was never quite caught in the net of the Medici paganism. He devised a series of illustrations for Dante's *Divine Comedy,* and when the Medicis were expelled from Florence, and Savonarola thundered against tyranny and sin, the artist was caught up in the ascetic reaction. Botticelli was Savonarola's most famous convert, and his conversion is immortalised in the series of pictures of which *The Calumny of Apelles* is perhaps the most famous. *The Nativity* in the National Gallery is another example. In it the fantasy of Botticelli's earlier work has

given place to a dead seriousness of purpose and conviction.

The three supreme artists of the Italian Renaissance were Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo and Rafael. Mrs. Rachel Taylor says: "Painting remains the typical Renaissance art, partly because it was borne vehemently and suddenly from a more primitive mode to a greater perfection of craft, partly because it administered more luxuriously to the pride of the eye, but especially because the emotional ecstasy of colour was so deeply implicated in the Renaissance temper."

Leonardo da Vinci was the most versatile great man that the world has ever known. Great men are rarely versatile. Versatile men are seldom really great. Da Vinci was great in every one of his many gifts. He was painter and sculptor, a scientific inventor centuries ahead of his time, an engineer, a musician, a deviser of ballets, a chemist, and the author of one of the first books on anatomy. He was born in Florence in 1452, he died in 1519. By a strange fatality, most of Da Vinci's pictures have been destroyed, but the world knows his genius from the famous *Last Supper*, preserved

in Milan, and by the *Mona Lisa*, at the Louvre, which was painted while the artist was staying at the Court of François I of France.

Da Vinci's life was crammed with varying activity. In the years of the new birth of Europe he was triumphantly alive. He was whole-heartedly with the revolt against mediæval asceticism. He sneered at the friars as Pharisees. He had all the Renaissance reverence for classicism. He was almost inhumanly hungry for knowledge, so eager to discover the secrets of life that he indulged in such odd and grotesque experiments as the construction of a gruesome creature from parts of various reptiles. He left behind him a record of his philosophy and of the events of his life; his most interesting aphorism being that " wisdom is the daughter of experience." That indeed is the summary of the mind of Renaissance Italy, the rejection of every dogma and every theory that could not be tested, the desire to fill the years of life with experience of every sort and kind. In this respect Da Vinci was like to Cesare Borgia, who was for a short time his patron.

In his old age, Da Vinci was a remarkable looking man, with shaggy eyebrows, large impressive eyes, and long, flowing hair and beard. He had immense physical strength, and his manner was magnificent. His mode of working was erratic, as it would naturally be in a man of so many interests and activities. Writing of his painting of the *Last Supper*, his contemporary, Bandello, says: "He was wont, as I myself have often seen, to mount the scaffolding early in the morning and work until the approach of night. In the interest of painting he forgot both meat and drink. Then came two, three, or even four days when he did not stir a hand. He spent an hour or two contemplating his work, examining and criticising his figures. I have seen him too, at noon, when the sun stood in the sign of Leo, leave the Corte Vecchia in the centre of the town where he was engaged on his equestrian statue and go straight to Santa Maria delle Grazie, mount the scaffolding, seize a brush, add two or three touches to a single figure, and return forthwith."

Da Vinci's theories of art are set out in his famous *Treatise on Painting*, in which he says,

"By far the more important point in the whole theory of painting is to make the actions express the psychical state of each character, that is desire, disdain, anger, pity and the like."

Modesty was not one of Da Vinci's qualities. He realized his greatness quite as clearly as it was realized by his contemporaries, and as it has been acknowledged by posterity. The modernity of his mind is proved by the fact that he made a study of the flight of birds and was persuaded of the possibility of constructing a flying machine. In his rejection of traditional beliefs, in his love of beauty, in his keen interest in Nature, in his hunger for experiment and experience, as in his splendid achievement, Leonardo da Vinci *was* the Italian Renaissance—courageous, gorgeous, insolent.

Michael Angelo was born in a small town near Florence in 1474. While he was still a boy his skill as a sculptor was brought to the knowledge of Lorenzo de' Medici, who took him into his household and made him an allowance. Like Botticelli he was for a time affected by the preaching of Savonarola, but he seems to have dreaded the possibility of conversion, and before the great preacher established his rule in

Florence, Michael Angelo went to Venice and afterwards to Rome, where he created his famous statues of the pagan gods. The martyrdom of Savonarola, however, had a considerable effect on his nature, and in the years that followed he spent himself on the famous marble group of the *Virgin and the Child*, in which he expressed "a sorrow more beautiful than beauty itself."

Michael Angelo was only twenty-three when this great work was produced. He was already a famous sculptor, but from that moment to the end of his life he was a melancholy and unhappy man, jealous, morose, and suspicious. Great genius as he was, perhaps the greatest artist that ever lived, and much vaunted as is the patronage of art shown by the Renaissance princes, Michael Angelo was the constant victim of his patrons. Pope Julius II commissioned him to build a mighty mausoleum, and when the artist had spent eight months in selecting and buying the marble, the Pope altered his mind and the artist was unpaid both for his work and his material. A year or two afterwards, the Pope ordered him, the great sculptor, to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. He

hated the work, but he could not refuse to do it. He declined to have any assistance, and every day for four years he lay on his back feverishly painting the frescoes that remain among the wonders of the world.

The frescoes consist of three groups of three scenes each, telling the story of the Creation, the fall of man, and the uselessness of sacrifice under the old dispensation. Michael Angelo was only thirty-seven when he finished his great work, but he was old, worn-out and broken. He had had many troubles, and finding no further commissions in Rome, he was forced to return to Florence, unceasingly working with his chisel. He was in Rome again in 1544, commissioned to paint the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel that represent the Last Judgment. This work took him five years, and he then was ordered to design the dome for St. Peter's.

Michael Angelo lived to be nearly ninety. He lived the most frugal of lives, eating and drinking little, sleeping little, and working until two days before his death. Mrs. Taylor says: "Michael Angelo's one interest was the soul of man and the body exalted or

tormented by that soul. He was supremely intellectual among artists, and a mystic, a reader of Dante and of Savonarola. More than all others of his time he was conscious of disaster and the prophet thereof; the knowledge that times of wrack and change were at hand bowed him with a tremendous melancholy, unlike the Renaissance melancholy which is ever the shadow of pleasure."

Something of the same suggestion is made by Gobineau in his *The Renaissance*, when he makes Michael Angelo say:

MICHAEL ANGELO: I knew Fra Girolamo [Savonarola], madam, and never has the look of that august countenance faded from my memory. I have lived upon his teachings. Whether it be that he asks too much of us, or that poor Italy presumed too much upon her strength and that her imagination outstripped her honesty. . . . Italy left his hands and remained in those of vice. Yet, nevertheless, she knew herself; she was conscious of her superiority to the rest of the world. She despised the other countries and used their resources for her own ends; she was the object of their admiration, and she knew it. She

knew herself to be great, and dreamed only of becoming greater. Her artists—you know what they were! Now, all is over. The fire has gone out. Italy exists no more. Those whom we despised are becoming our masters. The artists have perished. I am the last survivor of the holy company; they who are called by the same glorious name that we bore, are now nothing but traffickers, and impudent traffickers to boot. We had indeed to die! We are dying badly, unhappily. What matter? There have been beautiful spirits, glorious spirits in this Italy, she that is henceforth enslaved and prostrate. I do not regret having lived.

MARCHIONESS: Alas! I am less detached than you are. I feel pained at the glorious things we have left or are leaving. It seems as if, after being flooded with light, our tottering steps are going forward into the dark.

MICHAEL ANGELO: We are bequeathing a great legacy, great examples. . . . The earth is richer than it was before our coming. . . . What is to disappear will not disappear altogether. . . . The fields can rest and remain fallow for a while; the seed is in the clods. The fog may spread and the grey and watery

sky become covered with mist and rain; but the sun is above. . . . Who knows what will come again?

Michael Angelo was grim, melancholy, and dissatisfied. His great contemporary Rafael, who was born in Urbino in 1483, was the happy artist. He was handsome, good-tempered, kindly, and universally popular. In 1511 he obtained the official appointment of chief architect of St. Peter's at Rome, and his busy brush never wanted employment. Michael Angelo died weary and worn at eighty-nine, Rafael died when he was only thirty-seven.

Rafael was a great decorator, loving colour and rhythm. Content with the pleasant superficialities of life and with no impetus in the insistent struggle towards reality that characterised Michael Angelo, he was happy and versatile, and, as far as he went, sincere. A child of the Renaissance in his love of beauty, an appealing figure in a country and an age where men were generally too large in their virtues and their vices to be altogether attractive. Vasari says of Rafael: "His sweet and gracious nature was so perfect in all the charities, that not only was he honoured of men, but even by

the animals who followed his steps and always loved him."

The modern world knows Rafael best by his portrait of Pope Julius II, by his Sistine Madonna, and his Ansidei Madonna, the last of which is in the National Gallery.

Benvenuto Cellini, the great goldsmith of the Renaissance, whose masterpieces are preserved in the Treasury of St. Peter's at Rome and whose bronze *Perseus with the Head of the Slain Medusa* in Florence is one of the most beautiful things in the world, was the author of an autobiography as interesting from one point of view as the *Confessions* of St. Augustine and of Rousseau, and from another point of view as the Diary of Samuel Pepys. With a candour that equals that of Rousseau, Cellini describes the incidents of his life—the busy life of a sixteenth-century craftsman—revealing himself without reticence or shame as a murderer, an insolent braggart, a crazy sensualist, a man compact of passion and conceit. At the same time the *Autobiography* gives us a picture of the intimate life of Renaissance Italy, the time of fevered activity and enthusiasm, when life was cheap, crime was a

commonplace, and there was no authority to protect the peaceful and law-abiding from the violent and lawless. Incidentally Cellini was the friend of Michael Angelo and Rafael, and for them both he expresses deep and sincere admiration.

Born in 1500 and dying in 1570, Cellini worked in Rome during the pontificates of the later Renaissance Popes, from whom he received patronage and encouragement. His autobiography is interspersed with pious ejaculations. That was the habit of the age, but he was in fact as irreligious as he was immoral, and if it is true, as J. A. Symonds says, that in the *Autobiography* "the genius of the Renaissance incarnate in a single personality leans forth and speaks to us," then the genius of the Renaissance was, as I have before suggested, repellent and disgusting.

Cellini lived hard and worked hard. He was a rake, but he was also a great artist. The account at the end of the *Autobiography* of the casting of the *Perseus* is an extraordinarily interesting story of perseverance and ingenuity. It is highly characteristic of the man and of his time that when Cellini found that his work

had been carried out with entire success he records: "Seeing my work finished I fell upon my knees and with all my heart gave thanks to God." And he was no hypocrite. He says, "I have always been the greatest friend of truth and foe of lies." That is evidently true. He certainly made no sort of attempt to paint himself in attractive colours, and with lip piety it is evident that he regarded murder and rape as the everyday incidents of life. The combination of apparently sincere faith and unqualified unscrupulousness and immorality is typical of Renaissance Italy, of the Italy that worshipped Pan while not daring quite to forget Christ.

Tiziano Vecchiello, commonly known as Titian, was probably born in 1477, six years before the birth of Rafael. But while Rafael died when he was thirty-seven, Titian, like Michael Angelo, lived to be eighty-nine. He was the first of the great school of Venetian Renaissance painters, expressing in his art the spirit of his age, both in its paganism and in its joyous revelling in the wonders of Nature. Titian was born in a village high up in the Alps, and his mountain origin gave him a magnifi-

cently healthy frame and "the natural point of view of a man who wandered on the tops of mountains, who never knew trivial care, nor even experienced sickness; and therefore saw the world healthy and beautiful in gleaming and majestic splendour."

Before he was thirty, Titian was universally accepted as the greatest artist of all time. Michael Angelo received faint appreciation and consideration; Titian was for a generation a hero in the city of Venice, which had adopted him for its own. He lived in a palace, entertained kings, and when he died, after a splendid old age, the whole city mourned his loss.

Titian's picture *The Assumption of the Virgin* is the expression of the new naturalism, the understanding of the phenomena of Nature. As Vasari has said, "We almost hear the wind caused by the soaring ascent of the Virgin." In the picture miscalled *Sacred and Profane Love* there is a whole-hearted revelling in female beauty, as there is in all the pictures of robust, large and mature woman, that Titian loved to paint. His most famous picture, *The Death of Peter Martyr*, painted for the

church of San Giovanni e San Paolo at Venice, was destroyed by fire in 1867.

Tintoretto (his real name was Jacopo Robusti), the second of the Venetian painters, was born in 1512 and was a pupil of Titian, and a painter of quite extraordinary energy and industry. Tintoretto was a decorator, an individual, wilful genius who "would in no wise give obedience to commands," in spirit far more akin to the gloomy foreboding of Savonarola and Michael Angelo than to the joyousness of Rafael and Titian. He lived until 1594, when the early promise of the Renaissance had been lost in the Wars of Religion that destroyed the unity of Europe, and when the political glory of Renaissance Italy had already come to an end. His *Paradise* in the ducal palace at Venice was the largest picture known.

Paul Veronese (Paolo Cagliari) was a contemporary of Tintoretto. His art was entirely of this world, and it was he who immortalized the colourful pageantry of Renaissance Venice. The monasteries were the patrons of Veronese, and this fact is regarded as evidence that by the middle of the sixteenth century mediæval

cloistered gloom had come entirely to an end and the religious orders had abandoned asceticism as they had lost their piety. *The Last Supper* of Veronese, now in the Louvre, is so entirely worldly, so full of absolutely inappropriate glitter and luxury, that even the painter's clerical patrons were horrified, and he was summoned before the Inquisition and sternly admonished for his secularization of the most sacred of subjects.

Greek influence is obvious in some of the work of Veronese, and this is natural enough when one remembers the close connection between Venice and the Byzantine Empire. This Greek influence, which in him, and in others of the great Italian painters of the time, led to the sumptuous pagan treatment of sacred subjects —had an inevitable reaction and Lorenzo Lotto, who worked in the first half of the sixteenth century, returned to the formal Byzantine inhuman method in his religious pictures.

The decoration of Renaissance Italy was not entirely the work of great painters and sculptors. Mrs. Taylor says: "Supporting and surrounding these great arts of the eye

was an infinity of little arts, so that it is difficult to imagine how intricately the setting of life was filled with beautiful work of the hand and the imagination, where now the interstices are stopped with ugly mechanical devices. The churches had their altars, their pulpits, their cantoria, their ciboria, tabernacles, tombs, doors, fonts, balustrades, lamps, candelabra, holy vessels and sacramental garments, all calling for ingenious craftsmen, and great artists. The palaces had hangings, carpets, plate, torch-rests, fireplaces, tarsia-work, reliefs, terra-cotta, mosaic, their enamels, and their majolica. Even pieces of the pavement of the Cortile of Isabella d'Este in the Castello Vecchio are now kept in museums as precious relics. The people had their jewels and embroidered sleeves, the men their swords and helms, the women their golden garlands. Besides the guilds of specialized workers, the artists were ready enough to do anything that participated in the beauty of life, from a statue to a toy, like Cellini; and Leonardo would turn aside to link a curious spiral pattern for a woman's sleeve."

In Spain, the art of the Renaissance found its

great exponent in El Greco, who, as his name indicates, was by birth a Greek, born in Crete in 1455. He worked for a time in Venice under Titian, and settled in Toledo in 1475. El Greco is the artistic son of the counter-Reformation. His pictures preserve for us the spirit of Spain at a time when the country was stirred by the preaching of Loyola, and by the enthusiastic desire to restore the unity of Christendom, both by a reformed Catholicism as well as by the destruction of Protestantism.

It is said that El Greco's picture *Christ Driving the Traders from the Temple*, now in the National Gallery, should be regarded as an allegory of the Purification of the Church by the founder of the Order of Jesuits. In mind El Greco was a gloomy mystic; as an artist he regarded colour as of greater importance than form or design.

The Renaissance saw two entirely different schools of painting in Europe; the Latin school, which I have briefly described, and the Northern school, of which Albert Dürer was the earliest exponent. Great Renaissance literature was produced in Italy, Spain, France and England; no great literature was produced

during the hundred and fifty years in Germany or the Netherlands. But these countries made important and highly characteristic contributions to the pictorial art of the age.

Albert Dürer was born in 1471 in Nuremberg. His father, whose portrait is at the National Gallery, was a goldsmith. When he was twenty-seven, Dürer published his famous illustrations to the Apocalypse. They are incidentally an attack on clerical corruption. In 1506 Dürer visited Venice, where his work found high praise from artists and critics. He died in 1528, leaving behind him an amazing number of great paintings. His energy and industry were equal to those of Michael Angelo and Titian, and there is a certain resemblance, with essential differences, between the man of the North and the men of the South. There is not, however, in the work of Dürer the smallest suggestion of the joy of life so keenly appreciated by the Italian Renaissance painters. He was a German, a man of simple domestic tastes, and of equally simple piety, with a humility that Michael Angelo certainly did not possess. Perhaps his personality finds its most complete expression in his print *Melancholia*,

which he produced just after the death of his mother. In it he suggests the futility of all man's inventions and all his qualities, unless they are accompanied by faith. Dürer was the artistic interpreter of the Reformation. To him Luther was " the enlightened one," but like Erasmus he never broke with the Catholic Church, believing, as Sir Thomas More believed, that abuses might be destroyed and spirit quickened while vital unity was maintained.

When Dürer died, his friend Pirkheimer wrote of him : " It is well that you should call him happy, for Christ illuminated him and called him away in a good hour from tempests, and possibly yet more stormy times."

Hans Holbein was twenty-six years younger than Dürer. He was born at Augsburg, and his father was also a painter. For some years he lived in Basel, where he met Erasmus and where he obtained considerable fame as a book illustrator and a painter of portraits. Through Erasmus he became known to Sir Thomas More, and in 1526, the confused state of Germany making it an unwholesome place for art and artists, he came to England for a visit, returning in 1531, when he obtained the patronage of

German merchants in London, a patronage which resulted in his being appointed Court painter to Henry VIII.

Holbein's art makes the Tudor age live for us as no previous age in England's history lives. He has enabled us to visualize Henry VIII and his Court. Holbein was a very acute man of business, whose success was not a little due to his tact and to his capacity for making friends in high places. Early in his career he realized the growing importance of the trading classes. He painted the German merchants in London, he painted Flemish burghers, and this emphasis on the new importance of a class disregarded a generation before is the artistic reminder of an important aspect of the Renaissance. Holbein's famous woodcut *The Dance of Death*, produced in the period before he came to England, is a democratic reminder that, however unequal may be the circumstances of men's lives, all men are equal when Death knocks at the door.

Holbein died of the plague in London in 1543.

AT Rome and at Florence, says Dr. Robert Murray, the Renaissance was at home in the Court, whereas in Germany its true home was the University. Of all the North European Renaissance scholars Erasmus was the greatest in his influence on his age. Erasmus was born in Holland in 1467. He became an Augustinian Canon when he was nineteen and was ordained priest in 1492. The monastic life was as uncongenial to him as it was to Rabelais, and after two years he obtained permission to leave his monastery to become Latin secretary to the Bishop of Cambrai. The next ten years of his life were spent in study at Paris, at Louvain and at Oxford, where he met first John Colet, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's and the founder of St. Paul's School. In 1505, Erasmus paid his second visit to England and the next year he went to Italy. His reception in Rome was more than flattering, but he felt that his

freedom of judgment was necessarily restricted in the city of Popes and Cardinals, and, soon after the accession of Henry VIII, he again came to England, staying for a while with Sir Thomas More in London and afterwards residing at Cambridge. In 1514 he went to Germany and the greater part of the rest of his life was spent within the borders of the Empire, first at Basel, where his books were published by the famous publisher Froben, and afterwards at Freiburg. He died in 1536 at the age of seventy.

Few men had a greater reputation in the sixteenth century. He wrote in 1527: "I have drawers full of letters from kings, princes, cardinals, dukes, nobles and bishops written with the utmost civility. I receive uncommon and valuable presents from many of them." Kings bid against each other to secure the presence of the scholar at their Courts. Henry VIII almost became his collaborator. Three Popes were his patrons, and towards the end of his life he might, despite his attacks on ecclesiastical abuses, have received a cardinal's hat from Paul III if he had possessed any such ambition.

It is difficult for us to understand the Renaissance enthusiasm for learning and scholarship. Even the most arrogant sovereign felt himself honoured by the presence of a famous scholar at his Court. In the eighteenth century the great man condescendingly patronized the man of letters, keeping him humbly waiting in his ante-room. In the sixteenth century the prince sought the friendship of the scholar, and that friendship made him the greater prince. The Renaissance princes themselves were certainly better educated than the princes of our own time. Lucrezia Borgia, before she was in her teens, spoke and wrote Greek, Italian and French and some Latin in addition to her native Spanish. Elizabeth spoke French and Italian as fluently as English, and when she was a young girl she began every day with an hour's reading of the Greek Testament, the tragedies of Sophocles and the orations of Demosthenes. Edward VI was a good classical scholar; Queen Mary wrote Latin fluently.

Erasmus was essentially a man of letters, the most considerable and worthy exponent of the New Learning. The paganism of the

Italian Renaissance was as antipathetic to him as the exaggerated asceticism of the mediæval monasteries. He was not really a great scholar; the Greek texts that he edited are generally full of errors. But he stood for the doctrine that without knowledge there can be no progress and no enduring faith, and he aimed in his Greek Testament, in his paraphrases of the Books of the Bible, and in his edition of the Fathers, at a return to primitive teaching, sweeping away, with one fine robust gesture, the elaborate and worthless discussions of the Schoolmen, which had overlaid and hidden essential truth.

There were many translations of the Bible in English before the dawn of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Caxton printed part of the Old Testament and nearly all the New Testament in a collection called *The Golden Legend*, which was a translation from the Vulgate, the Latin version of the Bible made by St. Jerome in the Middle Ages. The inaccuracies of these popular versions and his own love of learning for learning's sake induced Erasmus to prepare his texts, his hope being that through his labours the Bible would be

accessible to the simplest. "I wish," he said, "that even the weakest woman might read the Gospel and the Epistles of St. Paul. I wish that they were translated into all languages, so as to be read and understood not only by Scots and Irishmen but even by Saracens and Turks. But the first step to their being read is to make them intelligible to the reader. I long for the day when the husbandman shall sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, when the weaver shall hum them to the time of his shuttle, when the traveller shall while away with their stories the weariness of his journey."

With his enthusiasm for primitive truth, Erasmus had a whole-hearted contempt for the men who obscured truth. In his famous book *The Praise of Folly*, he pours scorn on the dry-as-dust student, the quibbling philosopher, the superstitious sportsman and the sinner who believed that his sins would be pardoned if he bought indulgences. Erasmus is every bit as candid as Rabelais, though he has none of his humour, and it is a remarkable fact, not to be forgotten in considering the spirit of the Renaissance, that Erasmus never

suffered any real persecution and that, even at the time when he was receiving pensions from Protestant kings and prelates, he was offered high preferment by the Catholic Church. Historically, indeed, the most important aspect of Erasmus's life is that he never ceased to be a priest and that while he used his genius to attack abuses, he never abjured essential Catholic doctrine, nor had he any sympathy with heresy or schism.

It is outside my purpose to enter into the merits of the great religious controversies that filled the later years of the Renaissance and occasioned the Wars of Religion, destroyed the comity of the Continent and tore it into jealous and contending States. It is, however, necessary to emphasize the fact that Erasmus, the greatest of the Renaissance humanists, was not only antagonized by the extravagances of some of the Reformers who embarrassed him by claiming to be his pupils, but that, because he was a humanist, he was antagonistic to the creation of national churches, inevitably destined to encourage that spirit of excessive nationalism which has been the most considerable factor in European politics since the

beginning of the seventeenth century, and which has been the cause of countless wars and the consequent suffering and loss and death. The principal political achievement of the Renaissance was the creation of autocratic Governments, and autocratic Governments obviously depended on the emphasis of the national spirit and on national differences. The king looks for his justification in the peculiar and separative qualities of the people whom he rules.

In a subsequent chapter I shall describe the social conditions of the common people during the years of glory and magnificence, the age of Cesare Borgia, Charles V, Francis I, Henry VIII and Elizabeth. Never has there been a greater contrast between the splendour of the Court and the squalor of the cottage. But grievous as were the Renaissance conditions of life for the labouring classes, and great as was the decline in the average standard of comfort, the humanist who studies the period must chiefly deplore the creation of nationalities and the accompanying rise of autocracy that made the Renaissance so fertile a source of woe for succeeding genera-

tions. Erasmus had a seer's anticipation of what was to happen. He realized what must follow the destruction of European unity. With his devotion to a sane internationalism, his sympathy with the unfortunate and the unhappy was greater than that of any of his contemporaries. His contempt for the bad ruler was every bit as great as his contempt for the bad priest. He wrote: "The people build cities princes pull down; the industry of the citizens creates wealth for rapacious lords to plunder; plebeian magistrates pass good laws for kings to violate; the people love peace and their rulers stir up war."

Erasmus was essentially a bookman and not a man of affairs, a revealer of abuses and not a reformer. Without being a subtle theologian, and caring nothing for theological niceties, he believed that the reform of Christendom depended on a return to the Gospels, and he regarded the Bible, which he insisted should be read and accepted to a large extent as an allegory, as the supreme guide to conduct. Erasmus was no democrat. The arrival of democracy may have been prepared during the Renaissance, but its birth

belongs to a later age, and he was as insistent as Machiavelli that a prince, even a good prince, who cares for his people's welfare, should never be affected by their opinions. He believed that virtue was impossible without knowledge, hence his eagerness to discover all that was best and most enduring in the books of the Fathers. But good as was the knowledge of the past and of other men's teaching and achievements, to Erasmus the most important and vital knowledge was knowledge of oneself. Important as were the things of the mind, the things of the soul were still more important. "What is religion?" he asks in a letter to the Bishop of Winchester, and he answers, "Is it anything else but true and perfect love? Is it not to die with Christ? Is it not to live with Him?"

If God does not, as the mediæval monks contended, require man's knowledge, He certainly neither requires nor values man's ignorance. Erasmus was anxious to cleanse the Church of ignorance and of the scandals that came from the loose lives of the monks and secular priests. He was eager not to destroy the power of the Church, but to make that

power greater by restoring pure doctrine and encouraging pure living. It has been said that he himself cared little about dogma, but he infinitely preferred the traditional dogma of the Church to the dogmas expounded by Protestant teachers. He valued the Church not merely because of its religious element and significance, but because it was the one power capable of holding Europe together as an entity.

In approaching the study of the Reformation it must be remembered that in the darkest years there were Church reformers with something of the progressive temper of Erasmus and with his unshaken fidelity to the one Church. St. Francis and Savonarola were great reformers. Never did Erasmus repeat the attacks on the essential doctrine of the Catholic Church made by Wycliff and reiterated by John Huss in the early fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, possibly because of his realization that the acceptance of essential doctrine was vital to the existence of a universal Church. But he builded better—or maybe worse—than he knew. During his lifetime, it was said that Erasmus laid the egg that Luther

hatched. Luther was unquestionably influenced by Erasmus and called him "our honour and our hope," as Calvin called him "the honour and delight of letters." His teaching and his criticism prepared the way for the revolt which he dreaded and deplored.

Luther was a man of peasant origin, in many respects the disciple of Huss as Huss was the disciple of Wycliff. Like Rabelais, like Erasmus, like Sir Thomas More, Luther was moved to indignation by the corruption of the Church, which with the Borgias reigning in Rome had become more obvious and blatant. Luther was a man of action, a popular teacher, a religious enthusiast, something of a mystic. Erasmus wrote in Latin for scholars, Luther wrote in German for the people. Erasmus was a reformer. Luther was a revolutionary. Erasmus and Rabelais stand for the doubts of the Renaissance, Luther and Loyola stand for its revived faith. Erasmus desired nothing so much as the unity of Christendom. Luther broke with the Catholic Church, not only repudiating the authority of its Pontiff, its bishops and its priests, but also rejecting its sacramental and essential doctrines.

From the point of view of this brief summary, the most interesting aspect of the work of Luther is that he was a German revolting against international authority. . Whether or not the revolt had sufficient justification, whether the consequences for the world were good or evil, there is immense significance in Luther's provocative inquiry: "What have we Germans to do with St. Peter?" It is perfectly true that Luther was a Christian mystic preaching, as he believed, a return to primitive and purer Christianity; it is equally true that Luther was a German in revolt against an authority that was non-German. Thus, among other things, Luther was one of the chief architects of modern disunited Europe, the countries of which had ceased by the end of the Renaissance to have any common allegiance or any common faith. The unity achieved by the Roman Empire, and maintained in circumstances of ever-increasing difficulty by the Roman Church, was finally brought to an end when Luther nailed his famous protest on the church doors at Wittenberg. It must not be supposed that I am suggesting that this was the act of an irresponsible eccentric, or that I am implying

that the break-up of Europe was the result of one cause or the achievement of one individual. The decadence of the Middle Ages, the obscurantism of the monasteries, the gorgeous worldly luxury of Renaissance Rome, inevitably led to reaction and revolt, and the revolt meant Nationalism, the beginning of national rather than of continental patriotism, the separatism which has inspired heroes and poets for four centuries, but which has also brought with it an incalculable amount of material and human suffering, of which the Great War of 1914 to 1918 was the latest, though possibly not the last, incident.

When a radical thinker such as Mr. H. G. Wells says that Western civilization must inevitably be destroyed unless Nationalism, as we know it, gives place to a similarly real and vivid Internationalism, they postulate the necessity for the creation of some authority which will command universal loyalty as the Catholic Church commanded that loyalty before the Reformation.

Martin Luther was born in 1483. Like Erasmus he was an Augustinian and in 1508 he was sent with some other monks to Witten-

berg, where he first began to preach. As is well known, his revolt against Rome began with the protest against the sale of indulgences by the Dutch Dominican, Tetzel. From that time Luther steadily developed his opposition not only to the practices, but also to the doctrines of the Catholic Church. In the year 1521, soon after Charles V had been crowned Emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle, he was summoned to attend the Diet of Worms, where he delivered a fierce and uncompromising speech which roused the ire of the orthodox Spaniards attached to the Court of the Emperor and was received with enthusiasm by the majority of the Germans. Luther had indeed become the idol of the German people, of the prince as well as of the peasant. He was regarded not only as a religious leader heading a revolt against the abuses of the established Church, but also as a German patriot bravely protesting against the encroachments of Italians and Spaniards. The Peasant War of 1525 was without question largely brought about by Luther's teaching. He had preached what Dr. Lindsay has called religious democracy, and the German peasant, suffering from the

material ills common in the sixteenth century, naturally supposed that religious democracy implied social democracy and rose against his oppressors. Luther did his utmost to prevent the rising and when he failed, as I have already said, he issued a pamphlet in which he urged the ruling classes ruthlessly to suppress the revolting peasants.

This is a very important fact in the life of the German reformer. The Lutheran Churches that he founded are, like the Anglican Church in England, State Churches. Luther taught that the final ecclesiastical authority was the civil authority. It therefore followed that he was vehemently opposed to rebellion against the civil authority, whether it came from inside the Church or from the subjects of the State. None of the ecclesiastics who submitted to the arrogant claims of Henry VIII was more subservient than Luther to the civil power, the culminating proof of his subservience being his sanction of the bigamous marriage of the Landgrave Philip of Hesse. In his *The Emperor Charles V* Mr. E. Armstrong says that "Luther and his associates lost all reverence for authority except that of the lord from

whom they drew their stipend." It would be entirely outside the scope of this little book to discuss at length the peculiar doctrines of Luther and to point out how Lutheranism differs from other forms of Protestantism. Two points of importance are that the Protestant Reformers, for good or for evil, broke the unity of Europe, and that Luther and the English Reformers contrived the establishment of State Churches subject to a supreme temporal sovereignty. It was the realization of the importance of European unity, and the dread of the State control of the Church, that prevented great humanists like Erasmus and More from following their own protests against ecclesiastical abuses to what might have seemed their logical conclusion. Though, too, the basis of the teaching of Luther is the right of the individual to direct access to his Maker, from the very beginning the Lutheran refused to admit absolute freedom of conscience, and Protestants as well as Catholics were eager persecutors of the Anabaptists and other religious eccentrics.

It was indeed natural that the leaders of the early revolt against the Church of Rome

should have feared the reaction inevitably to be caused by the extremists who were individualists in religion and communists in politics, Bolshevists born three centuries before their time.

As the Revival of Learning was intimately associated with the pagan excesses of Rome and Florence, it was not unnatural that the triumph of Protestantism in a large part of Germany should have been followed by the conviction that learning was a device of the devil. This was another of the consequences that Erasmus had foreseen. It was seriously suggested that all books except the Bible should be destroyed, and one party of German Protestants declared: "Perish the graces of the Latin language, perish the marvels of learning which obscure the glory of Christ; the word of Christ saves us, the word of others destroys us."

The character of Pope Alexander VI was one of the causes of the Reformation revolt and the character of Pope Leo X was a considerable factor in its early history. Leo X, the son of Lorenzo de' Medici, ascended the Papal Throne in 1513 at the early age of

thirty-eight, succeeding the extremely able Julius II, who has been described as the greatest Pope since Innocent III, who among other things excommunicated King John of England. Gobineau puts a comparison between the two Popes into the mouth of Michael Angelo :—

"Pope Leo X is not a lover of the arts. He is a lover of luxury, and that is quite a different thing. All that glitters and brings him praise seems to him worthy of his patronage, and his only intention is that the arts shall minister to his vanity. What they express concerns him but little. The first of mortals who practised luxury began, perhaps, to smooth the way by which the arts came into the world; but the second banished the arts in order to replace them by bombast and falsehood. . . .

"Julius II was the only true prince that my eyes have ever beheld. He was not a man for fleshly enjoyment. He conceived nothing but the imposing, and admitted nothing but strength. His sole preoccupation in all matters was to create and leave behind him the Church triumphant crushing beneath her sinewy foot

the resistance of the impious. He aimed at reforming the whole clergy, at driving the barbarians from Italy. . . . From his artists he demanded great monuments, vast frescoes, immense canvases; he thought only of the gigantic, as befitted so imperious a soul as his."

With his genius for realizing the great characters of the Renaissance, Gobineau develops the qualities of Leo X in a speech that he gives to Machiavelli:—

"I regard him simply as a respectable aristocrat, of easy manners, taking care of his mind as he takes care of his hands. . . . He displays exquisite taste in everything, and he has a kind heart. He takes no less valiantly to the village buffoons than to Sadoleto or Ariosto; he orders frescoes and statues and makes Rafael paint pictures, because these are expensive trinkets, and, to achieve more outward glory, the Pope would willingly make a star his plaything; but rest assured that in his heart of hearts he prefers a hare hunt on his estate at Magliana, or a dainty supper at the Vatican, to the contemplation of all your masterpieces."

This is doubtless a fair summary. Leo X was made a Cardinal when he was fourteen and formally admitted to the Sacred College when he was seventeen. He contrived to live in Rome without being poisoned during the pontificate of Alexander VI, and he was elected Pope as the candidate of the younger Cardinals. In secular affairs he had two ambitions; the enrichment of his family and the unification of Italy. In the first he succeeded, but in his patriotic intentions he failed. He made Rome the capital of European culture, he reformed the University, ensuring large salaries to its professors, he made Rafael the custodian of classical antiquities, he was the patron of poets and artists, he had his own printing press, printing among other things an edition of the Talmud and the first Greek book ever printed in Rome. The Venetian ambassador to the Papal Court said of him in 1517: "The Pope is a good-natured and extremely free-hearted man, who avoids every difficult situation and above all wants peace; he would not undertake a war himself unless his own personal interests were involved; he loves learning, of canon law and literature he

possesses a remarkable knowledge; he is, moreover, a very excellent musician." Here is the typical Renaissance figure, the lover of luxury and the lover of learning, kindly and selfish, shallow and sympathetic, worldly and yet pious.

It was difficult for Leo to understand the mind of the Reformers. To him it was just folly for men to get excited about things that did not matter. When Erasmus visited Rome he was received with great favour, and if the great Dutchman had chosen he might have become a Cardinal and might possibly have sat in St. Peter's chair. The Pope, too, refused to join in the persecution of Luther. Luther's indignation had been roused by the selling of indulgences for which the Pope was directly responsible, and no doubt it appeared to Leo very inconsiderate that an Augustinian Canon should have interfered with so easy and obvious a way of raising money. Leo always wanted money. His predecessor, Julius II, had been thrifty and temperate in all worldly things, a striking contrast to Leo who, to fill his treasury, sold Cardinal's hats and borrowed from princes and Jews. He had been obliged to pawn his table plate, furniture, and even his statues of

the Apostles, and it must have seemed to such a man perfectly justifiable to sell indulgences that pleased the buyer and brought money to his coffers. Nevertheless, when Luther was denounced the Pope was actually his defender. Gobineau makes him say:—

"I shall attend to this Wittenberg affair myself, and I hope to direct it in such a way as to put an end to the absurdities by which it has been complicated. This Luther, against whom the Franciscans declaim so loudly, is no fool; he is not an unlettered monk, as most of them are. He has wit, learning and reason. He writes to me in a most polite tone, and I shall support him against the Tetzels, the Ecciuses, and all that troop of ridiculous fanatics. Such men are trying to kindle a fire in Germany. I will not have it."

Leo X was humanist enough to realize that persecution often results in worse things for the persecutor than for the persecuted. Savonarola had been the enemy of his house, the foe of the Medicis, and "they have succeeded in making him a saint through the absurd cruelty with which they treated him." He was determined not to make Luther a saint.

It was a curious situation. On the one hand the reformer, at first hesitating, but every day growing bolder and more convinced of the necessity of open revolt against the whole authority of the Church, incidentally a German with a German's serious moral purpose. On the other hand the orthodox monks, most of them as ignorant as Luther was learned, sincerely outraged by his heresies and by his attacks on papal authority, and also doubtless outraged by his interference with a profitable traffic. Between them an easy-going humanist Pope desiring peace, disliking monkish earnestness and ignorance, and quite failing to understand the character of the reformer. The situation has great historic interest because Luther's early disinclination to break away from Rome, and the Pope's disinclination to punish his critic, suggest that if character and statecraft had been joined to the toleration of Rome and if patience had been added to the earnestness of Wittenberg, Luther might have died within the Catholic Church.

Leo X was succeeded by Adrian VI, a Dutchman, first the tutor, and then the *protégé* of

the Emperor Charles V, who practically nominated him for the Papal See. Gobineau has summarized Adrian's dream of the Pope that the age needed :—

" He will have to be a Pope, not a prince; a theologian, not a man of letters; an ascetic, not a voluptuary. Let him live on mouldy bread and coarse herbs, and not on elaborate dishes served on platters of gold; I would see him use only wooden porringers ! With his beggar's staff he must break the idols of ancient paganism, with which the Holy Palaces are crammed, to the dire scandal of consciences, and, so far from listening with delight to the rounded phrases of the Bembos and the Vidas, he must pack off all that crew to the prisons of the Holy Office and make them taste there the bitterest penitence. Yes, Caesar; penitence, penitence, that alone can save the world."

Adrian was sixty-three when he became Pope. He seriously endeavoured to pit reform of the Church against the rising tide of Protestant heresy, and he frankly admitted at the Diet of Nuremberg that the Church was in disorder and that reform was urgently needed. But Adrian VI had a task beyond his strength.

A foreigner in Italy, almost a barbarian in the home of culture, he was fiercely opposed by the pleasure-loving, cultured Cardinals, and he was unable to carry out the reforms on which his heart was set. Moreover, the Lutheran revolt had gone too far to be stemmed, and, while the Pope was emphatic in his admission of disorder, he was sternly opposed to any doctrinal compromise.

Years after Lutheranism had been firmly established in Germany, John Calvin, a Frenchman born in Picardy in 1509, developed and codified the doctrines of Protestantism with the ruthless logic characteristic of the French mind. The outcome of Lutheranism was the institution of State religions. It has already been shown that the quarrel between Henry VIII and Rome was actuated solely by the idea of adding to the power and authority of the national sovereign by proclaiming him the head both of the Church and of the State. Similarly in Germany Lutheranism was a political weapon in the hands of the German Protestant sovereigns. I am not suggesting that this is all that it was, but it has already been seen that the Renaissance was an era

of separatism, an era in which the European idea was lost in the creation of local patriotisms, and these local patriotisms were immensely strengthened by the revolt against Rome, by the break with the hitherto unchallenged head of the Western Church, and by the creation of State churches. In many respects Lutheranism and Calvinism were radically unlike, and in nothing more than this: that while Lutheranism led to the institution of State religions, Calvin was eager to create a religious State. He actually instituted a theocratic Government in the city of Geneva, which compelled every citizen to be a Church member, and made the civil authorities subservient to the head of the Church. No Pope had ever claimed more complete ascendancy in mundane affairs than Calvin established in Geneva.

In Germany the Reformation was to a large extent a popular movement. In England opinion was influenced by the personal popularity of Henry VIII, who in quarrelling with the Pope, was, in a sense, maintaining the traditional independence of the English Church, which had in the Middle Ages shown a deter-

mined persistence in maintaining a definite nationality within the Universal Church. Henry VIII's break with Rome, therefore, which entailed no sort of difference in religious doctrine or practice, was regarded with more or less indifference by the people, although it was resisted by far-seeing Christians like Sir Thomas More who realized the inevitable degrading influence of acknowledged secular supremacy in the Christian Church. The suppression of the monasteries and the subsequent suppression of the trade guilds, with the spoliation of their funds and possessions, turned the majority of the English people violently against the new State religion. But the Tudors had firmly established their authority, revolts against that authority were swiftly and ruthlessly suppressed, and England was gradually compelled to accept the new State Church against the will of the greater part of the people. I do not think there is the smallest doubt that this is historically correct. It is also equally evident that at the end of the reign of Elizabeth the majority of the English people had become definitely and enthusiastically Protestant. The explana-

tion is to be found in the gradual development of the national idea.

When Mary became queen and set herself to undo the anti-Catholic work of Thomas Cromwell and Somerset, the people saw behind the queen the sinister figure of her Spanish husband. England and Spain had become rivals in the struggle for the possession of the newly-found American continent. A new type of adventurer had been created by the new conditions, and adventures of infinite peril with the possibility of almost infinite reward were found in the attacks on Spanish colonies and Spanish treasure ships. In the world of the Reformation Spain had remained faithful to Rome; from Spain had come the counter-Reformation, which I shall presently describe. To be the enemy of Spain was to be the enemy of Rome and was to lay oneself open to punishment, not as a pirate, but as a heretic, and the new national pride engendered in England during the reign of Henry VIII, to be immensely developed in the days of Elizabeth, bitterly resented the rule of a Spanish king and everything that rule entailed.

The trite saying that the Church is watered

by the blood of her martyrs has a wide significance in the reign of Queen Mary, for I think it may be safely said that the Marian persecutions were the beginning of popular English Protestantism. The Catholics were persecuted by Elizabeth almost as relentlessly as the Protestants were persecuted by her sister. The English have never tamely submitted to persecution of any sort and undoubtedly the Elizabethan persecutions were widely resented. But Elizabeth was a national hero, the embodiment of the national idea. When she burned a Jesuit it was understood that he was burned as the enemy of the Crown and therefore of the country, and the nationality that was inflamed by the martyrdom of Ridley and Latimer was actually stimulated by the subsequent persecutions.

At the accession of Elizabeth two-thirds of the English people were Catholic rather than Protestant, but the Protestant minority was vigorous, enthusiastic, and earnest. Elizabeth herself cared nothing for religion. She was, as has been well said, a child of the Italian Renaissance, and her attitude towards the Reformers was exceedingly like the attitude

of Lorenzo de' Medici to Savonarola. She accepted her father's break with Rome as a political step not to be retraced unless it was evidently politically expedient. But at the beginning she carefully avoided emphasizing her own headship of the Church. In everything her father's daughter, she followed his example in appropriating ecclesiastical property. To a bishop who protested she wrote: "Proud Prelate, you know what you were before I made you what you are. If you do not immediately comply with my request, by God I will unfrock you."

It was not until an order from Rome prohibited pious Catholics from attending services in English churches that Elizabeth found herself in open antagonism with the head of the Roman Church. This occurred in 1562 and was the beginning of the long struggle with Rome which was regarded by the majority of the English people as a national struggle with Spain.

Into an atmosphere of religious unreality, Calvin brought the element of genuine belief. Disciples from all over Europe collected at Geneva, listened to Calvin as to an inspired

prophet of God, learned his doctrines and hurried home to preach them to their countrymen. The most famous of his disciples was John Knox, and Scotland gladly accepted the Calvinist teaching of the Predestination of Man, the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and the pre-eminence of spiritual over secular authority. It was a popular doctrine appealing particularly to a nation of obstinate individualists, for it gave to each individual, however poor and humble, a new and almost startling dignity. Calvinism had the same attraction for a considerable section of the English people. Elizabeth would have none of it. It was a challenge to her authority and she treated the Puritan Calvinist as ruthlessly as she treated the Catholic Jesuit. While Elizabeth lived and dazzled the English people, that is to say, until the end of the Renaissance, the English Calvinists were obscure, diffident, and with no political power. When the iron hand of the Tudor was removed, Calvinism developed in England as it had developed in Scotland, and the Puritan revolution was the dominating political event of the succeeding century.

In France Protestantism was never a popular

movement, except in certain districts of the South. The Huguenots were merchants and nobles, doubtless sincere in the repudiation of Catholic doctrines, but gradually becoming a political party, bady led, fanatically foolish in outraging the opinions of the majority of their fellows, seriously threatening the national unity which owed its beginning to Louis XI, and was developed by Richelieu and Henry IV. The Wars of Religion tore France to pieces during a large part of the sixteenth century. This prevented France from playing any great part in the European drama; they compelled her to take second place both to Spain and England, and it became evident that there could be no internal peace and no unity while the nation was riven between two parties holding different faiths and contending, not for religious freedom, but for political supremacy.

The horrors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew are defensible according to the ruthless politics of the Renaissance. Catherine de Medici, a monster of personal iniquity, was as free from religious prejudice as Elizabeth herself. For some time she hesitated between

Protestantism and Catholicism, but when she was convinced that France was essentially a Catholic country and that the Huguenots could never be more than a troublesome minority, she determined to wipe them out as speedily and effectively as possible. Catherine accepted the declaration of Philip II that "Neither the authority of princes nor concord among subjects can exist when there are two religions." To us St. Bartholomew's Night is a monstrous crime. I have little doubt that Elizabeth at the bottom of her heart regarded it as a wise political expedient. When Henry IV made his famous exchange of a Mass for a Crown there was never again any serious fear that the Huguenots would threaten French national unity. The King's conversion had its effect in the South and from the end of the Renaissance French Protestants have remained a small particularist sect.

Almost contemporaneous with Calvin was Ignatius Loyola, the Spaniard who, beginning life as a soldier, established the Society of Jesus as an army of the Church, enlisting under him men from whom he demanded implicit obedience and measureless self-sacrifice. The

business of the Jesuit was to fight heresy, to re-establish the sway of the Church where it had been destroyed, and to bring the newly discovered countries of the West into obedience to the Holy See. It is important to note that the Renaissance which began with a note of joy, of exultation in the New Learning, with the loudly expressed assertion that the life of this world is a splendid colourful adventure, saw, long before its end, a return to a more than mediæval sternness. If the typical figures of the beginning of the Renaissance are Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo and Rafael, exulting in splendour and colour, the typical figures of the latter half of the Renaissance are Calvin and Loyola, stern moralists and religious reformers, equally ruthless in the suppression of opinion with which they were in disagreement. The two spirits of the Renaissance, the earlier and the later, met when John Knox stood before Mary Queen of Scots in Holyrood Palace. Mary had the culture of the Renaissance; she was a votary of the New Learning, she loved beauty, and she was as unmoral as the Borgias, and as hungry for personal power as Henry VIII.

She stood for the Renaissance of the Medicis, the Renaissance of the artist. John Knox, stern, dour, caring nothing for the fineness of life, held by a moral purpose, regarding loyalty to a sovereign a small matter compared to loyalty to God, stood for the Renaissance of Calvin and Loyola.

I have suggested before that the Renaissance was an era of loss rather than of gain. It saw many great achievements, it was a century and a half of great men. But its promise was never fulfilled. It saw reaction as well as action. There could have been nothing but disappointment for a man who experienced the thrills of the middle of the fifteenth century if he had lived to see the beginning of the seventeenth. First came the loss of faith with the consequent disregard of moral restraints—the paganism of Renaissance Italy. Then the loss of European unity—the development of the national idea with its warring ambitions and jealousies destined to aggravate suffering until our own time. Then the establishment of absolutism, in England only to last for a century, in France to continue till 1789. With the development of nationalism

and absolutism in France, Spain, and England, Italy became a satrapy of Austria and Spain. Diversity of religion plunged France into civil war. Then came the reaction, the moral revolt that once more emphasized the insistent human need of faith and right conduct, and the reaction led to the Puritan depreciation of beauty and art, and to bitter religious persecutions both by Catholics and Protestants.

The Renaissance humanists—Rabelais, Erasmus, and the great painters—exulted in life. It was good to be a man, living was a fine adventure. But humanism passed and there was a return to an exaggeration of the other-worldliness of the mediæval saints which had been the subject of the humanists' gibes and scorn. To the Puritan and to the Jesuit, this life was merely the introduction to the life to come, a period of stern preparation and duty, in which so great was the necessity for salvation that salvation must be forced on the unwilling, if needs be, at the stake. The Renaissance saw a vast increase in knowledge; it saw little increase in sympathy.

The Catholic Church, with the realization of its divine mission restored to it by the Jesuits,

largely re-established its authority in Europe before the Renaissance came to an end. Spain remained faithful, France was once more almost entirely Catholic, the English Church, broken from Rome as it was, remained Catholic, a great part of Germany was either held or won back, while the Spanish occupation of South America added both to the wealth and influence of Rome. But the establishment of Lutheranism in Germany and the spread of Calvinistic doctrine in Scotland and England, in the next century—to cross the Atlantic with the settlement of the Puritan Pilgrims in North America—led to the creation of two Europes where before there had been only one, to the existence of two different cultures in almost all respects antipathetic to each other.

It is of course arguable that it has been for the good of humanity that the European nations should have worked out their destinies on different lines, but it is curious to compare the beginning and the end of the century and a half with which we are concerned. Florence in 1453 was a city of happy poets, art-loving princes, comparatively prosperous poor. A few years later Rabelais's loud laughter was

heard all over France, Erasmus was teaching man a new sympathy as an accompaniment to the New Learning, and with young handsome kings on the thrones of France and England, men everywhere looked forward to a new day of happiness and content. But consider Europe in 1600—Italy the prey of the foreign invader; Spain ruled by gloomy King Philip, with the Inquisition a dark shadow in the lives of even the most orthodox; France, after the assassination of Henry IV thrown back into civil war by the struggle between Mazarin and the Fronde; England in the last days of Elizabeth gloomy and apprehensive, forgetting the glories of the defeat of the Armada in dislike of the coming of the Scottish king.

Chapter VI — *Social Conditions*

THE political revolution of the Renaissance, the establishment of absolutism, and the development of the idea of nationality, were accompanied by industrial and economic changes which were on the whole entirely reactionary. The revolt against the authority of the Church, the assertion of the right of individual criticism of what had before been unchallengeable authority, led to the emphasis of individualism. Burckhart says that in the Middle Ages "man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation." He was in fact a social being existing only as one among many. During the Renaissance man, to quote Dr. Elliot Binns, began to demand respect for "his rights and value as a person." The Lutheran, and still more emphatically the Calvinist, declared that the individual must approach God simply as an individual without the inter-

mediary help of a priest, and unsupported by the prayers of the saints. It might have been supposed that this assertion of the dignity and importance of man as an individual must have resulted in an enlargement of personal liberty. The Renaissance saw no such enlargement. Indeed, despite Calvin, despite the Puritan revolution in England, despite John Knox and the Covenanters and the Pilgrim settlers in North America, one had to wait until the latter half of the eighteenth century for Rousseau formally to enunciate the Rights of Man and for the French Revolution to make an unsuccessful attempt to put Rousseau's doctrines into practice. And then it was the Rights of Man, a narrow and, as has been proved, unpractical individualism, and not the Rights of Men on which emphasis was laid. Another century was to pass before the Rights of Men were asserted in the teachings of modern Socialism, in which man is regarded, not as a self-centred individual, but as a member of a community exactly as he was regarded in the Middle Ages.

The Renaissance began with a great declaration of liberty—liberty for the scholar to read what he would, liberty for the artist to paint

what he chose, liberty for the philosopher to say what he believed, but this liberty, the liberty of the Italy of the Borgias and of the Medicis, was accompanied by unbridled licence of conduct. It was the lust of the Renaissance Pope far more than the ignorance of the mediæval monk that provoked the Reformation, the religious disruption of Europe, the Wars of Religion, and the creation of nationalities. At the beginning of the Renaissance, write Messrs. Symon and Bensusan, "life became lyric once more and the Florentines went singing to the pipes of Pan." The lyric was very short and the Florentines went singing to the pipes of Pan to the devil. The humanist properly attacked monkish ignorance and monkish hypocrisy, but nothing but evil came to the world from the abandonment of the restrictions of Christian morality and the scorn of Christian asceticism. The piping of Pan must have sounded alluring in the gardens of the Medici, but it was paid for two generations later when Italy was overrun by the condottieri and enslaved by Spain. Pan's pipes might be heard in the Courts of the Valois king of France and echoed in the towns and

villages ruined during the wars of religion. Pan piped too among the Italianized nobles, Leicester and the rest, at the Court of Elizabeth, whose magnificence was accompanied by the growing poverty of what once had been a prosperous peasantry, ruined by the suppression of the monasteries and the economic development that covered the land with pasture and sheep where before there had been corn and men.

All the political and religious changes of the hundred years that followed, changes that marked the end of European unity, are to be directly traced to the paganized and therefore weakened Rome of Alexander VI, Julius II and Leo X. The liberty that accompanied the licence was itself short-lived. If the Reformation was the consequence of a philosophic assertion of man's right to judge and decide for himself, it became very soon a mere assertion of man's right not to believe and not to decide as Rome ordered or suggested. New presbyter was old priest writ large. "The Protestants," said Bossuet, "are in accord with us that the Christian princes have the right to make use of the sword against their subjects

who are hostile to the Church and to the holy doctrine." Luther urged the persecution of the Protestant sects not in agreement with him, declaring that they were " an inspiration of the Devil." Theodore de Bèze called liberty of conscience " a diabolical dogma." Calvin and Knox were as intolerant as the Jesuits. It was indeed as dangerous to be a Roman Catholic and almost as dangerous to be a Puritan in Elizabethan England as it was to be a Protestant in the Spain of Philip, and far more dangerous than it was to be a Protestant in the France of Henry IV. Before the Renaissance individual judgment in matters of religion, when it led to the repudiation of Catholic doctrine and practice, was heresy, an offence against what was then the Universal Church. By the end of the Renaissance it had become an offence against secular authority, a crime against the State. But the State demanded an exactly similar submission to authority as the Universal Church had demanded. In the fourteenth century men all through Europe were required to be Catholics; in seventeenth-century Europe an Englishman was required to be an Anglican, a Scotsman was required to

be a Calvinist, and a Spaniard was required to be a Catholic. There was no greater freedom and the only difference was that authority had become local and not universal.

In an earlier chapter I have described the growth of absolutism with its destruction of the real if limited political liberty that had existed in the Middle Ages. One particularly interesting aspect of the destruction of this partial democracy arose from the merging of the life of the individual towns and cities in a new and virile life of the nation. In the Middle Ages the English boroughs were self-governing communities. In her *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, Mrs. J. R. Green relates how on June 29th, 1200, "the whole community of the borough of Ipswich" elected two bailiffs by whom the town was to be governed and four coroners whose business it was to see that the bailiffs treated rich and poor justly. On the same day it was ordered that there should be "twelve sworn capital portmen, just as there are in other boroughs of England, who are to have full power to govern and uphold the said borough with all its liberties, to render the judgments of the town, and to ordain and do

all things necessary for the maintenance of its honour." Mrs. Green adds: "In due time the whole community was called together to give their assent and consent to these ordinances; and they once more assembled to bestow a portion of their common land on the portmen in return for their labour in the common service, and to agree that all the laws and free customs of the town should be entered in a doomsday roll to be kept by the bailiffs." Similar democratic governments existed in all the other English boroughs.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, that golden age of Europe, the traders were a new democracy. They grew more prosperous as the years passed and both in France and in England their political importance increased with the decadence of the nobility occasioned by feudal struggles and dynastic wars. In the fifteenth century the privilege of the rich merchants was threatened by another democratic development. Again to quote Mrs. Green: "The humbler sort of trader and artisans, congregated more and more thickly at the busy centres of industry, made familiar with the uses and methods of association, and

impatient both of tyranny and of want, were beginning to form a new democracy, and to constitute to the comfortable classes an alarming social danger. In every borough the problems which confront the modern world were formulated. On all sides agitators proclaimed the right of the workers to have a voice in the organization of trade, and the right of the common burghers to share in the control of municipal affairs. The demand of the people that government should really be carried on by their consent, so easily stifled in the thirteenth century, became in the fifteenth loud and persistent." England was indeed threatened at the beginning of the Renaissance with a struggle between the middle and the lower classes such as has existed during the last half century. It was staved off during the reign of Henry VIII by the creation of an extremely efficient centralized government under Wolsey and Cromwell. A government concerned with establishing autocracy and adding to national prestige could not remain indifferent to local politics and local aspirations. The State swallowed the town and the State was the king. Mrs. Green says: "Muni-

cipal independence was struck down at the very roots, and the free growth of earlier days arrested by an iron discipline invented at Westminster, and enforced by a selected company of Townhall officials, whose authority was felt to be ultimately supported by the majesty of the king himself. The number of the town councillors was constantly diminished, and the liberties of the commons curtailed."

The craft guilds of the Middle Ages had ensured the actual worker a more or less adequate wage and had given their members generally a monopoly of their particular trade in each town. The guilds were definitely religious in their constitution. They not only enforced the mutual duties that nowadays belong to members of a trade union, but they added to them the obligation of attending masses for the souls of departed craftsmen, and of assembling at church for common prayer and worship. As the wealth of the town increased, in the guilds, the membership of which included both masters and men, authority gradually became a monopoly of the employing class, the journeyman had less and less influence and the guilds, in many instances,

became mere instruments for keeping him in subjection and for compelling him to obedience and to the acceptance of such terms as the master class dictated. It was the craft guilds as distinguished from the merchant guilds that formed the nucleus of revolt against the tyranny of the richer burghers to which I have referred. Until the reign of Henry VIII they had sufficient power to make the richer classes distinctively uncomfortable. They were a constant reminder that too great oppression would mean certain trouble, and thus in a way they provided the worker with much the same protection as the modern trade union. The creation of absolutism, with its incidental necessity of holding the borough faithful to the king, naturally led to an alliance between the rich burgher and the central authority. The suppression of the monasteries was promptly followed by Cromwell's suppression of the craft guilds, an exercise of authority which left the town worker in England with no effective weapon with which to fight for a comparatively decent existence until the rise of the trade union in the nineteenth century.

With the passing of the craft guilds the

artisan came down to the same level of economic weakness as the hordes of the unorganized and unskilled. He was powerless to obtain better conditions of life even with the great expansion of trade that marked the Tudor period in England. His wages could give him nothing but a bare subsistence. The conditions of his life were as unaffected by Elizabethan discoveries as they were by the Puritan revolution. It is often suggested that it was only with the industrial revolution of the later eighteenth century that the lot of the English townsmen became wretched and barely supportable. But the real beginning of hard times in England goes back three centuries earlier, when greed and autocracy destroyed what piety and mutual self-protection had created. It is extremely difficult to arrive at anything like an accurate idea of the sort of life led by the town worker during the sixteenth century, when there was no Hogarth to leave us pictures of sordid slums and no *Piers Plowman* was written in which we might read of the sorrows of the poor. Enough, however, is known to make it clear that with the New Learning, the glories of Courts, the thrills of

discovery and the great achievements of literature and art, the Renaissance saw, so far as the towns were concerned, a definite decline all through Europe in the by no means high standard of comfort enjoyed by the poor in the Middle Ages, while, in England anyhow, they lost the weapon with which they had been able to fight for reasonable conditions and to defeat attempts to deprive them of their rights and privileges. The tale of the English city was repeated in the English countryside. The fifteenth century is the century of enclosures, when land that had hitherto been open became fenced-in fields. Much of this enclosure was sheer theft, " the appropriation of common pastures, woods and wastes, and sometimes even the open arable fields and meadows, and of the cottages of peasants by the lords of the manors and other large holders of estates."

The manufacture of cloth became a great English industry during the reign of Edward IV, and consequently sheep farming became the most profitable form of husbandry. Towards the end of the century the rich town merchant began to buy country estates from

the nobles impoverished during the Wars of the Roses. These new landlords, trained to the making of profits, were naturally eager to use their land to the greatest advantage. Sir Thomas More says: "The farmers were got rid of by force or fraud or tired out with repeated wrongs into parting with their property." The small holdings of the peasants were appropriated, villages and even churches were pulled down and turned into sheep-walks. An Act of Parliament passed in 1534 records that owing to these changes in the countryside "a marvellous number of people of this realm be not able to provide for themselves, their wives and children, but be so discouraged with misery and poverty that they fall daily to theft and robbery and pitifully die for hunger and cold." And a contemporary ballad runs:—

> Commons do close and kepe,
> Poor folk for bred do cry and wepe,
> Towns pulled down to pasture shepe,
> This is the new guide.

Country life was made infinitely harder by the suppression of the monasteries to which, even in their decadent days, the peasant had gone for help and advice. In his *A Short*

History of English Rural Life, Mr. Montague Fordham says: "Rural life was greatly affected by the suppression of the monasteries and appropriation of their manors and other land by Henry VIII; he, whilst announcing his intention of disposing of these estates 'to the honour of God and the wealth of the nation,' proceeded to sell or to distribute them among his courtiers and others, who in their turn in many cases again sold the properties. One-fifteenth part of England, some authorities conjecture, so changed hands in the course of a few years; other writers think that far more land was dealt with. Probably as many as eight thousand monks, nuns and friars were at the same time impoverished. Their dependants involved in this catastrophe may have numbered ten times as many. Eighty to ninety thousand individuals thrown, even temporarily, out of employ in the course of a few years must have caused much misery, suffering and poverty. Moreover, the disappearance of the monasteries was a blow to agriculture, for some, at least, of the monks were good farmers, collecting information both at home and abroad, and constantly making

experiments with seeds introduced from other countries; whilst their successors were, to quote Sir Thomas More, 'covetous and insatiable cormorants,' who knew little about agriculture. These new men looked to their land to provide them with an income; they wanted to secure money either for sheep farms or for rents. As a result, on the old monastic land, even in those places where there were no appropriations, the copyholders and other customary tenants who held at fixed and moderate rents, were often deprived of their land, and leaseholders, at higher rents, took their places."

The suppression of the guilds affected village life as fatally as it affected town life. Again to quote Mr. Fordham: "In the XVth century much of the work of relieving poverty that the Church had previously undertaken had already devolved on village societies or gilds. At that time all the men of the various trades in a country district combined as a matter of course into societies or gilds of their own; there were also many social or religious gilds, consisting not only of men, but of 'wives' or of 'maidens.' These associations were spread throughout

the country, and were influential and important in the XVth and in the first half of the XVIth centuries. They acted, it appears, as saving banks, possibly lent money to members, and by undertaking the work of sick and benefit societies gave help to the poor. The gilds also appear to have organized and paid the expenses of pageants and plays, and probably arranged the games and amusements that were characteristic of the age and gave to England its title of 'Merrie England.' They kept people together, and the village alive. Unfortunately, Edward VI passed a statute which resulted in the appropriation of such part of the property of gilds as was employed in religious purposes, and some, though not all, of these societies must have been destroyed. It seems as if at this time the passion for appropriation of Church property spread throughout the country, and much of the miscellaneous property of the parish churches passed into lay hands. The destruction of the wealth of the Church and the decay of the gilds left the poor in a pitiable condition."

The statute to which Mr. Fordham refers was another example of that greed which under

specious pretexts robbed the monasteries to enrich the new Tudor nobility.

An Act of Parliament was passed in 1495 which ordered that all the able-bodied unemployed in the countryside should be set in the stocks and then should be expelled from the neighbourhood, the idea apparently being to compel the out-of-works to find work where no work was to be found. It being believed that drink was a cause of idleness Justices of the Peace were empowered to close any ale houses that they thought were unnecessary, and journeymen and apprentices both in town and country were forbidden to play at bowls or tennis, cards or dice, except at Christmas time. It is a suggestive fact that this very early Puritanical law-making was definitely and openly "class legislation."

The tremendous social changes caused by the rise in the price of wool and the consequent changing of thousand of acres of tilled pasture land are indicated by the famous statement of Latimer who said: "My father was a yeoman and had no lands of his own; only he had a farm of three or four pounds by the year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as

kept half a dozen men. He had walk for a hundred sheep and my mother milked thirty kine; he was able and did find the king a harness with himself and his horse while he came to the place that he should receive the king's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went to Blackheath Field. He kept me to school; he married my sisters with five pounds so that he brought them up in godliness and fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours, and some alms he gave to the poor, and all this he did of the same farm where he that now hath it payeth sixteen pounds by year or more, and is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, nor for his children, or give a cup of drink to the poor." If the fortunes of the yeoman class were thus impaired it is easy to understand the wretchedness of the labourers.

The luxury of Renaissance Italy was copied by the wealthier classes throughout western Europe, but in England, until the end of the sixteenth century, the houses of the majority of the people were insanitary and extremely filthy; the floors were of clay covered with rushes, rarely removed, which, to quote

Erasmus, " sometimes remain for twenty years nursing a collection of spilt beer and fishes' bones and other filth." Most of the monasteries had tolerable drainage and water supplies, but it was only when the monks allowed the neighbouring townspeople to use their water taps that the average person was able to secure untainted water. It is no wonder that the English habitually drank ale or wine, and that Sir Thomas More, who was a water-drinker, should for that reason have been regarded as an eccentric.

The new luxury with its interest in delicate food and dainty surroundings led to the importation into England of foreign craftsmen and foreign servants, and this led early in the sixteenth century to riots in the city of London against the importation of aliens. Long before the idea of nationalism was quickened by the Renaissance spirit the English had developed their characteristic insularity.

By the end of the sixteenth century England was, Mr. Fordham says, " full of paupers and sturdy beggars," and in 1601 the English Parliament passed the first Poor Law.

I have dealt in this chapter almost exclusively

with English conditions, but the conditions that prevailed in England were the same all through Europe. The rising of peasants in Germany after the Reformation despite the denunciations of Luther are evidence of the poverty in that country. Life was equally difficult for the poor in France and Italy. The Renaissance had great gifts for the artist and for the lover of beauty, for the poet and the lover of books, for the king, for the philosopher, for the adventurer. It had no gift for the working man.

For the prosperous, life became more refined. Comfort and luxury replaced the bare hardness of the Middle Ages. Eating became something more than the satisfying of appetite. The Renaissance saw a new interest in food, a refinement of physical and the beginning of æsthetic taste.

The new interest of literature inspired everywhere a new interest in science, in politics and in religion. In Sir Thomas More, almost alone among his contemporaries, it inspired humanistic political speculation. More is the most lovable figure of the whole Renaissance period. Holbein has left his pictures to posterity—

the vivacious, witty, intellectual, entirely lovable humanist. His home life at Chelsea with his wife and children was ideal. "I have given you kisses enough," he wrote to one of his daughters, "but stripes hardly ever." Erasmus frequently stayed in Chelsea and it was at More's house that he wrote his *Praise of Folly*. More's *Utopia* was inspired by the voyages of the navigators across the Atlantic. In it he describes the island of Nowhere, a dreamland where men have found equality, liberty and fraternity. More was not only concerned with the tiny minority that ruled the world, he was acutely alive to the great majority whose lot it is to toil and obey. He describes in *Utopia* with the fervour of a modern Socialist the exploitation of the poor by the rich with the consequence that the poor are doomed to "a life so wretched that even a beast's life seems enviable." Things are different in Nowhere where everyone works, goods are held in common, where there are universal education, good houses, spacious gardens, and broad streets, and where ample leisure enables the citizens to devote themselves "to the free liberty of the mind and garnishing of the same."

More covers the whole ground of social reform. Among other things he suggests that the object of punishment should be reform and not revenge, "nothing else but the destruction of vice and the saving of men." He proclaims the necessity for religious toleration and liberty of conscience. In his great book More shows himself in a dozen ways not only ahead of his age but ahead of the centuries that followed, and even to-day there is a tragic difference between the world in which we live and the Nowhere of which More dreamed. It was a great and splendid idea. *Utopia* was written in Latin and belongs more to the philosophy than to the literature of the Renaissance. I have suggested that Machiavelli's *The Prince* is a summary of the political philosophy of the age that had thrown aside the restriction and admonitions of Christianity in its zeal for neo-paganism. But More also belongs to the Renaissance and his idealistic dream of what the world might be is the antidote to Machiavelli's brutal insistence on the realities of the world that is. In every era of the world history there have existed the dreamers of dreams, and the dreams are

an inspiration, tending to become realities, even though it be after many days.

The economic life of Europe was revolutionised by the voyages of the great discoverers. Columbus landed in the Bahamas in 1492; Cabot discovered Labrador in 1497; Diego Velasquez subjugated Cuba in 1511; Ponce de Leon discovered the coast of Florida in 1512, Magellan passed through the straits that bear his name in 1520; Cortez conquered Mexico in 1521; Pizarro conquered Peru in 1535; Cartier sailed up the Gulf of St. Laurence to Montreal in 1535; De Soto conquered Louisiana in 1541; and Raleigh established the first English colony in Virginia in 1545. During the century that these westward voyages had been made, eastern voyages of almost equal importance had been accomplished. In the Middle Ages there was a great trade between Europe and the commercial centres of the Near East and the merchants of Alexandria and Venice bought the products of India and the rest of southern Asia. But the prices were high and the middleman's profit excessive. The endeavour therefore was made to establish a direct sea route between Europe

and India in order that Asiatic produce should be sold to European markets at more moderate prices.

Early in the fifteenth century Spanish and Portuguese vessels began to sail farther and farther south along the west coast of Africa. In 1462 they reached Sierra Leone; in 1469 they reached the mouth of the Congo; in 1486 they reached the Cape of Good Hope. In the year 1500 Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese navigator, rounded the Cape and discovered Indo-China and the Moluccas, and established a trade which for some generations remained a Portuguese monopoly. The first voyages of Columbus and Cabot, both of them Italians, the first in the service of Spain and the second in the service of England, were an attempt to break the Portuguese trade monopoly by reaching India by a westward voyage. No one ever guessed the existence of the American continent. When Columbus landed for the first time in the island of Cuba he thought it was Japan.

In 1502 Columbus reached the coast of Honduras; this was his last voyage. Another Italian, Americo Vespucci, landed on the coast

of Venezuela in 1499, and in 1514 Leonardo da Vinci drew a map of the world in which the name America was written across the South American continent. In 1496 John Cabot, a Venetian seaman, who had settled in Bristol, sailed from that town with his famous son Sebastian and discovered Newfoundland and Labrador. These men were the pioneers. They were followed by Spaniards who created the great Spanish Empire in South America, by Dutchmen, by Frenchmen, and by the great English sea captains of the sixteenth century, most of whom belonged to Devonshire and the West Country. The greatest of them all, Francis Drake, regarded as a dangerous pirate by the cautious Burleigh, and alternately patronized and snubbed by Queen Elizabeth to suit the policy of the moment, made his great voyage round the world during the years 1577 to 1580.

In an interesting passage in her *History of the People of England*, Miss Greenwood says of these sixteenth-century seamen: "The French and English seamen derided the claim of Spain to hold up for herself the world of gold and silver known as the Spanish Main

(land)—*i. e.* Mexico, Central America and the coast as far as the Orinoco mouths. Let the Spaniards see whether, as the better men, they could keep those countries, if not, mere priority in discovery should not avail them. Thus, English, French, and sometimes Netherland sailors engaged together in informal alliance in western trade, or piracy. It is noteworthy that a number of our sea-terms are in origin French, while others are Flemish. And, indeed, to the French mariners the English were greatly indebted, for they had been first on both African and Brazilian coasts, and showed the routes to English captains, while the friendly relations which they habitually cultivated with the natives were often extended to include the English. In America the 'Red Men,' whom the Spaniards enslaved, soon grasped the fact that the English were their allies. In Africa, the slave trade, in which Hawkins and some others followed the evil Portuguese example, was conducted in the teeth of French protests, and it brought its penalty in the fierce revenge wreaked by the negroes on many white crews and explorers.

"There is no clear line to be drawn between Elizabethan commerce, exploration, and raiding, especially as the captains of expeditions which often extended over more than one year could never tell whether a state of peace or war were existing; nor, after 1581 (when Philip II secured the crown of Portugal), could they guess whether the Portuguese of the Atlantic islands, or on the Brazil or Indian coasts, would elect to be the king of Spain's subjects or his enemies. In a season of such uncertainties audacity was the first condition of success, and the new vikings who laid the foundations of the East India Company, or attempted the first colonization of Virginia, or charted the Pacific route and the South American coasts, did so with royal charters and letters in one coffer and gunpowder in the rest. There were more individual failures than successes. More sailors paved the deep sea-ways with their bones than came riding home with booty, yet in the final result England was victorious. Spain, it seemed, could master the ocean only while none disputed it with her."

I have already referred to the intellectual

consequences of the new discoveries, the widening of men's minds to the greater and far more accurate knowledge of the earth. The industrial consequences were of equal importance. The Renaissance expeditions were not fitted out and subsidized with the idea of adding to knowledge. There was no sort of resemblance between modern expeditions to the South and North Poles and the voyages of the English, Spanish and Italian sea captains of the Renaissance. Their one idea was profit. Princes and wealthy nobles financially backed hardy and experienced seamen in return for the greater part of the spoils stolen from the unfortunate natives whose far away countries the seamen contrived to reach. The extreme masculinity, the hardiness that could endure privations, and the courage that no sort of danger could damp shown by the Renaissance navigators, are the greatest human glory of the age. The world has never seen men more splendidly dowered with the definite masculine qualities of endurance, persistence and courage, than the Spanish soldiers who fought with Cortez and Pizarro, the English seamen who sailed

with Francis Drake, and the Italian captains who served both Spain and England. From India and the East, Portuguese ships brought ivory and spices; from the West, Spanish galleons brought cargoes of silver and gold. So far as America was concerned the Spaniards were far more intent on exploitation than on colonization. They had discovered new countries where wealth abounded and their business was to seize the wealth and send it to Europe primarily for the benefit of the King of Spain, secondly for the benefit of his nobles and courtiers, and thirdly for the benefit of the sailors themselves. Spain became the richest country in the world, but it was appropriated and not created wealth and the battening on America weakened the character of the Spanish people. From the day when the first galleon brought its first cargo of gold and silver into Cadiz may be reckoned the decadence of the great Power which throughout the sixteenth century challenged France for continental supremacy, and England for the mastery of the seas.

Gold and silver were relatively scarce in

the Europe of the Middle Ages, and until the fifteenth century barter was still often the method employed for the buying and selling of commodities. One result of the Spanish seizure of the American silver mines was that in a few years there was an ample supply of silver in all the European countries and that the metal fell to a quarter of its previous value; this meant that commodities became four times as dear and this enormous increase in the price of necessities, a far larger increase than that caused by the economic chaos of the Great War, vastly added to the troubles of the poor and was an important factor in the fall of the average standard of comfort.

The second important result of the successful expeditions to India and America was that for the first time the investor found ample opportunity for the use of his accumulated savings. Money was required for the outfit of ships and for the payment of the sailors, and the capital required was found by groups of merchants who did not sail the ship or face the risks of the voyage, but who remained comfortably at home to receive a large per-

centage of the profits if the expedition succeeded, and to lose their savings if it failed. In the Middle Ages with its simple industries, its great fairs, and its restricted world, the merchant earned his profits by his own ingenuity and industry exactly as the artisan earned his wages by his industry and skill. The idle investor, taking no personal risks and having no direct personal part in the money-making scheme by which he stood to gain most, is just as typical a Renaissance figure as Cesare Borgia, Savonarola, or Erasmus. The Renaissance saw the beginning of the "sleeping partner." The stay-at-home investor and the actual participants in the expeditions were equally ruthless concerning the manner in which profits were made. In reading the stories of Cortez and Pizarro one is astounded both by the dauntless courage of the Spaniards and by their almost incredible cruelty to the luckless people whose countries they had invaded. Jesuit missionaries went to the Spanish South American colonies in the endeavour to save the souls of the Indians whom Spain had conquered

But the general attitude of the conquerors was one of complete indifference to the people whose lands they had filched. It must not for a moment be supposed that the English, French and Dutch who followed the Spaniards across the Atlantic had any greater consideration. Francis Drake, who remains a great national hero, was to all intents and purposes a pirate. It is remarkable how many great national heroes (one thinks at once of Robin Hood and Rob Roy) would have found themselves in the police court dock had they lived in these degenerate days.

The Spaniards would not work in the new countries that had been added to the Spanish crown. The native inhabitants were soft and incapable of hard, persistent labour. To meet the difficulty in the early years of the sixteenth century negroes were kidnapped from the Portuguese African colonies and carried away as slaves to South America, and thus the Renaissance saw the beginning of the negro slave trade which existed for three hundred and fifty years. As the South American colonies became more and

more cultivated and as the production of sugar and coffee increased, more and more slaves were required. Every maritime nation in Europe was concerned in the traffic. In the sixteenth century one English captain admitted that in one slave raid several thousand negroes were killed in order that four hundred slaves might be captured. It is not necessary to emphasize the horrors of the traffic. Its importance in this brief history is that it is another example of the extreme thinness of the claims that, to quote Dr. Binns, the Renaissance was a definite step towards the "recognition of the rights and the value of individuals." Enough has been said to show that so far as the bulk of the population of Europe was concerned the individual lost the rights that had been his in the Middle Ages and suffered a grievous deterioration in the conditions of his everyday life, and certainly the slave trade, one of the most profitable of Renaissance enterprises, was not based on any academic regard for the "rights and the value of individuals."

It is impossible, indeed, to study the indus-

trial and economic history of the Renaissance without arriving at the suggestive conclusion that the individual can have no rights and certainly has no value except as a member of a community, except, that is to say, in the way in which he was regarded in the thirteenth century and in the way in which Socialists demand that he shall be regarded now. Slavery is the logical result of individualism. Freedom is only possible with the acceptance of the responsibilities and privileges of communal life. Dr. Binns admits this when he writes: "In the Middle Ages, with its simpler organization, the all-important factor in economics was the relation of persons; in our complicated and highly specialized modern system, persons are almost lost sight of, and what really counts is the manufacture and exchange of things. In other words, economics has ceased to be a department of ethics, and from an art has become a science, by its laws man is subordinated to wealth, and consumption to production."

In the thirteenth century, the zenith of the Middle Ages, Europe had one religion and

one culture, and while grievances were many and life was generally hard, the days of even the poorest were filled with varied interest and a certain simple culture. Work and social life were both vastly influenced by the "democratic and co-operative spirit that prevailed amongst the people." By the end of the seventeenth century, the zenith of the Renaissance, Europe had been split into a number of jealous nations, racial differences being accentuated by religious animosities. The wise may have grown wiser, the skilled may have grown more skilful, the rich had certainly grown richer, and the poor were infinitely poorer. The craft guilds in the towns had been destroyed and in the English countryside there were no longer monasteries for the poor to go to when ill or in trouble. The highways were full of homeless and landless men. It would have been small consolation to an English peasant, in the later years of Elizabeth, whose cottage had been pulled down that a sheep farm might be extended, workless and wageless and subject to the new Poor Law, to be assured that he lived in a wondrous age, a century of

achievement, discovery and glory, the century of Cervantes and Rabelais, and Shakespeare, Vasco da Gama and Cortez and Drake, of Henry IV and Elizabeth. What would he care?

00099269

Digitized with financial assistance from

H T Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018